Commentary
June 2002

Israel and the Anti-Semites
Gabriel Schoenfeld

Why the Settlements Should Stay
Hillel Halkin

Socialism's Nine Lives
Midge Decter

Birth of a Snob
Joseph Epstein

Tales of Suburban High
Kay S. Hymowitz

The Ashes of Napoleon
Algis Valiunas

What Was the Matter with Rachmaninoff?
Terry Teachout

Books in Review
David Pryce-Jones • Thomas L. Jeffers • Patrick Clawson
Jonathan Kay • Victor Davis Hanson

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New Book From Brookings Press On Educational Vouchers

In April, the Brookings Institution Press published *The Education Gap: Vouchers and Urban Schools*. According to John E. Brandl, dean, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota, "This is the most important book ever written on the subject of vouchers."

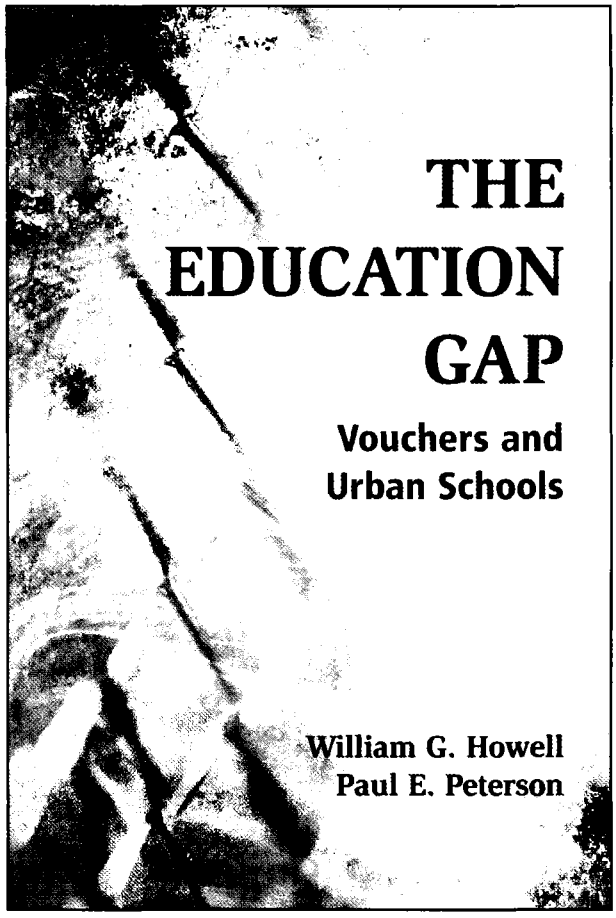
Brookings Press describes *The Education Gap* as follows:

"In *The Education Gap*, William Howell and Paul Peterson, with co-authors Patrick Wolf and David Campbell, report new findings drawn from the most comprehensive study on vouchers conducted to date....

"The findings shed new light on how existing voucher programs affect students' educational experiences, covering factors such as school climate, class size, homework, resources, and test scores. They also reveal the impact of voucher programs on racial segregation, school-family communication, political tolerance, community social capital, parental satisfaction, and children's self-esteem.

"Although the programs operated in a wide variety of settings, the findings were quite consistent. In combined results for New York, Dayton, and Washington, African American students participating in voucher programs scored, on average, three percentile points higher than their public school peers in Year I, six percentile points higher in Year II, and seven points higher in Year III....

"[T]he authors suggest that the limited educational options available to black Americans may [explain these gains]. Since many low-income African American families cannot easily move to neighborhoods with strong public schools, new forms of choice for low-income families are most likely to benefit African American students.



"The authors recommend that these issues be explored further in larger, better-funded voucher programs in central cities with high concentrations of African Americans. While acknowledging that vouchers are not a panacea for all the troubles in American education, Howell and Peterson report signs that vouchers may help close the achievement gap found nationwide between African American and white students."

A decade ago, when there was virtually no academic research on school vouchers, proponents and opponents monopolized the debate with intense opinions and theoretical arguments.

While the debate remains intense, the publication of such works as *The Education Gap* means it no longer occurs in a scholarly vacuum.

More information about *The Education Gap* is available at www.brookings.edu/bipress/books/education_gap.htm and www.ksg.harvard.edu pepg/.

baeo
Black Alliance for Educational Options

For more information go to: schoolchoiceinfo.org or baeo.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary

Vol. 113 · June 2002 · No. 6

ARTICLES

13

Israel and the Anti-Semites *Gabriel Schoenfeld*
Who and what are behind the new, potent form of this ancient hatred, and what does it portend?

21

Why the Settlements Should Stay *Hillel Halkin*
Contrary to conventional wisdom, Jewish outposts on the West Bank are not the obstacle to peace.

28

Socialism's Nine Lives *Midge Decter*
The long, dismal history of the Left's great creed has culminated in a "stupid" anti-Americanism.

34

Birth of a Snob *Joseph Epstein*
Looking down one's nose is an unappreciated art, and trickier than one might think.

OBSERVATIONS

38

Tales of Suburban High *Kay S. Hymowitz*
Even in our "good" schools, classroom travesties are the order of the day.

42

The Ashes of Napoleon *Algis Valiunas*
The "modern Caesar" achieved unprecedented glory—also, death and ruin on a vast scale.

MUSIC

47

What Was the Matter with Rachmaninoff? *Terry Teachout*
Long dismissed as a mere romantic, the great Russian composer heard and heeded the call of modernism.

LETTERS

3

Finding God; the Rosenbergs revisited; kibbutzniks; divorce; etc.

BOOKS

53 Why We Fight by William J. Bennett *David Pryce-Jones*

56 The Orchards of Syon by Geoffrey Hill *Thomas L. Jeffers*

61 Unholy War by John L. Esposito *Patrick Clawson*

65 The Death Penalty by Stuart Banner *Jonathan Kay*

69 Six Days of War by Michael B. Oren *Victor Davis Hanson*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Editor	Neal Kozodoy
Senior Editor	Gabriel Schoenfeld
Managing Editor	Gary Rosen
Assistant Editor	Benjamin Balint
Editor-at-Large	Norman Podhoretz
Advertising Director	Sarah M. Stern
Business Associate	Ilya Leyzerzon
Sales Representative	Del Fidanque
Production Assistant	Mark Lerer

COMMENTARY (ISSN 0010-2601) is published monthly (except for a combined July-August issue) by the American Jewish Committee. EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 East 56th Street, New York, NY 10022. Telephone: (212) 751-4000. Fax: (212) 891-6700. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Letters intended for publication may be edited. Single copy is $4.50; $45 a year, 2 years $79, 3 years $109. Add $11.00 per year for subscriptions to Canada and Mexico, $19.00 for all other foreign destinations. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to COMMENTARY, 165 East 56th Street, New York, NY 10022.

Copyright © 2002 by the American Jewish Committee; all rights reserved under International and Pan American Copyright Conventions.

Indexed in *Reader's Guide*, *Book Review Digest*, and elsewhere. Available in reference systems produced by ProQuest (800) 521-0600 and the Gale Group (800) 877-4253. U.S. newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors Inc., 1130 Cleveland Rd., Sandusky, OH 44870. Printed in the U.S.A.

WEBSITE: www.commentarymagazine.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE:
(800) 829-6270
service@commentarymagazine.com

EDITORIAL INQUIRIES:
editorial@commentarymagazine.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:
letters@commentarymagazine.com

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES:
advertising@commentarymagazine.com

The Commentary Publication Committee

Stanford M. Adelstein
Norman E. Alexander
Maurice S. Binkow
Howard I. Friedman
Stephen Friedman
Roger Hertog
Morton A. Kornreich
Jay Meltzer
Herman J. Obermayer
Robert L. Pelz
Robert A. Riesman
Gordon S. Rosenblum
Gary L. Rosenthal
Michael Saperstein
Michael W. Schwartz
Nanette Scofield
Henry Sherman
Walter P. Stern
Thomas J. Tisch

A Statement of Aims

In sponsoring COMMENTARY, the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY's contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. The sponsorship of COMMENTARY by the Committee is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.

American Jewish Committee
Harold Tanner,
President

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary
June 2002

Letters from Readers

Hallelujah

To the Editor:

Jennifer Moses' essay, "With God in Baton Rouge" [March], made me ache. Here is a Jew, obviously searching for something spiritual in life, having to learn about God from non-Jews rather than from the people who brought the idea of God to the world. I disagree with her father's assertion (cited by her) that "the Jewish tradition itself has inherent value, with or without God." No sane group would suffer what the Jewish people has suffered throughout history if not for its faith in God. If there is no God, it is safer to belong to the local bowling club than to the Jewish community.

Michael Braitman
Jerusalem, Israel

To the Editor:

Jennifer Moses' essay is easily worth a year's subscription. At least by this reader's lights, she succeeded wonderfully. I hope she finds a rabbi with some of the wisdom displayed by Joyce, the black nursing aide who assures her that there is a God in heaven Who hears our pleas and answers our prayers.

Rabbi Avi Shafran
New York City

To the Editor:

There cannot be many subscribers to Commentary who expect, still less hope, to be moved to tears by an article in its normally astringent pages. But "With God in Baton Rouge" is one of the most moving pieces of writing I have ever read in my life. It would be hard to offer it the praise it deserves without sounding maudlin; but at the risk of sounding corny, I wish to say that if the universe of evolution can produce a writer as honest and as remarkable as Jennifer Moses, I can only assume that it is being presided over by a God Who loves us all.

Rev. Edward T. Oakes
Denver, Colorado

To the Editor:

Jennifer Moses' essay is beautiful in its language and delightful in its content. I was amused by her picture-perfect description of the broken and faith-filled South. I was warmed by her care for those who suffer. I identified with her honest struggle with her faith. And I was silenced with wonder by her essay's powerful ending. I eagerly await her book on being Jewish in the South, and as a brand-new subscriber, I hope I never miss another issue of Commentary.

Kathleen Ryan
San Antonio, Texas

To the Editor:

"With God in Baton Rouge" is an extraordinary essay. With radical honesty and simple directness it reflects on the great question of how we are to live. I know of no better description of "becoming awake" (as a Zen master might put it) by faithful attention to the lessons of experience.

Hugh C. Murray
Seattle, Washington

Jennifer Moses writes:

As a writer who sits alone for hours every day in front of my computer, I never know whether my words will find an audience. I am grateful that this time they did.

Treason

To the Editor:

Mark Falcoff writes that Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton, among others, "have argued that Ethel Rosenberg's role was not significant enough to justify the punishment she received" ["Retrying the Rosenbergs (Again)," March]. But Radosh and Milton say more than that. In their book, *The Rosenberg File*, they write, "Up to the very day of Julius's arrest, the FBI's interest in Ethel Rosenberg had been nil. . . . The evidence against Ethel rested entirely on the Greenglasses' uncorroborated word, and placed her in an accessory role at best."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It has been said that J. Edgar Hoover wanted to spare Ethel. Why? We know that the FBI director was not soft on Communism. Perhaps he believed that the United States should not execute someone who has not committed a capital offense.

GEORGE JOCHNOWITZ
College of Staten Island
Staten Island, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

Even granting his claims that the Rosenbergs were guilty of helping to speed up Soviet atomic development, Mark Falcoff still glosses over a central problem: it was wrong to give them the death penalty. He seems to justify the sentence on the grounds that the Rosenbergs could have avoided it by coming clean. But loyalty to a cause, however perverted, is something that most Americans can understand. To "rat" may be the worst crime. The death sentence given to the Rosenbergs remains a blot on America's record of justice.

DONALD FELDSTEIN
Teaneck, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

Mark Falcoff's article on the ongoing efforts of some on the Left to deny the guilt of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg touches almost all the bases. He cogently presents both the case's larger context as part of the American struggle against Communism and its personal dimension, particularly the Rosenbergs' willingness to leave their very young children orphans in a society they deemed to be on the brink of becoming fascist.

But for me and, I suspect, many others, it is the role of anti-Semitism in the case that remains most painfully in our memories. As a Jewish student at City College in the early 1950's, I heard cries of "Free the Rosenbergs" from the leftists drowned out by chants of "Fry the Rosenbergs" from those who relished the opportunity to emphasize the spies' Jewishness. The Rosenbergs betrayed not only their country and their children, but also their fellow Jews.

SIDNEY HELFANT
Kingsborough Community College
Brooklyn, New York

MARK FALCOFF writes:

Since J. Edgar Hoover has been dead for some time now, it is not possible to ask him what he had in mind 50 years ago when Ethel Rosenberg faced the electric chair. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to assume that—good anti-Communist that he was—he also recognized that, whatever the merits of the government's case, executing a young mother would have a terrible effect worldwide on the image of the United States. If this is what Hoover thought, he was certainly right.

As for her guilt or innocence, or rather the degree of her guilt, George Jochnowitz should refer to the more recent paperback edition of *The Rosenberg File*. There, Radosh and Milton bring to bear the most recent revelations of the Venona decrypts, which show that Ethel Rosenberg was far more than a distant accessory before the fact. She was actively involved, for example, in recruiting people for the Rosenberg ring, including her own sister-in-law.

May I remind Mr. Jochnowitz that *conspiracy* to commit espionage is also a capital crime? Of course, if one does not believe in capital punishment, no transgression committed by either of the Rosenbergs—however heinous—would have justified their execution.

Contrary to what Donald Feldstein suggests, the Rosenbergs did not claim to be dying for a cause ("however perverted"), but rather to be martyrs to American fascism. Indeed, they denied all association with Communism and Communists, as well as with Soviet espionage. Only if they had proudly avowed what they had done would they deserve the kind of macabre respect that Mr. Feldstein seems prepared to grant them.

Mr. Feldstein seems also to have missed the entire point of my article, which was to take umbrage at the decision of the New York Historical Society to honor the Rosenbergs, not because they remained true to their deepest convictions—in this case, Soviet Communism and its global agenda—but because they were, presumably, the innocent victims of an ideological witch-hunt.

On the subject of anti-Semitism, what is striking to me in retrospect is how little impact the Rosenberg case had on the position of Jews in the United States. Whatever anti-Semitic battle cries it may have afforded scattered individuals or groups at the time, including those cited by Sidney Helfant, such sentiments gained virtually no political traction in the United States then or later.

Kibbutzniks

TO THE EDITOR:

I read Joshua Muravchik's article on the fall of Israel's kibbutz movement with great interest ["Socialism's Last Stand," March]. Although he precisely articulates the causes of this trend, he leaves out the story's epilogue: the movement's complete capitulation to capitalism. In recent years kibbutzniks have successfully lobbied the Israel Lands Authority to reclassify kibbutz land as private property ("we worked the land, therefore it is rightfully ours"). They have then sold the property to real-estate developers, often for a share of future profits.

As a result, the "millionaire kibbutznik" is no longer a rarity. The privatization of land that rightfully belongs to the state has become so prevalent that Israel's Knesset and high court have intervened to reverse it. The public outcry against former socialists getting rich in this way might just end their headlong dash into the ranks of the well-off.

MICHAEL D. HIRSCH
Kochav Yair, Israel

TO THE EDITOR:

Whatever the reasons for the decline of the kibbutz as an institution, I would not, like Joshua Muravchik, blame "human nature." Mr. Muravchik might well consider the Hutterites (or Hutterian Brethren) of Canada and the U.S. These strict "kibbutzniks" have lived, since the 1870's, in colonies in which property is communally owned. Today there are about 36,000 members residing in more than 430 settlements. They, and similar communal groups throughout the world, are far from a "last stand."

WERNER COHN
Brooklyn, New York

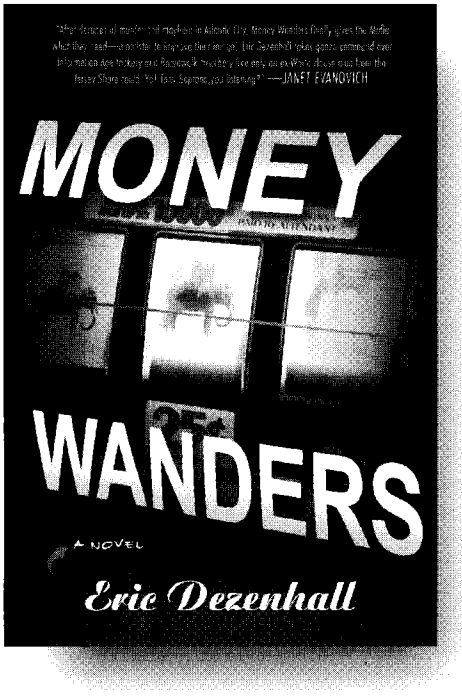
JOSHUA MURAVCHIK writes:

Thanks to Michael D. Hirsch for his letter. I do

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Is the Mafia a criminal group or just misunderstood?
Is drug trafficking immoral or "poorly positioned"?
Can a pollster put a positive spin on extortion?

Eric Dezenhall answers these and other questions in his critically acclaimed novel, *Money Wanders.*



"*Money Wanders* draws you in and keeps you with its winningly abrasive charm, its fine un-precious prose, and the truth of its characters and story. Dezenhall reads like Saul Bellow on a clear day, at his sharpest, best-focused, least self-indulgent peak. This is by far the best first novel I've read in a long time."

—David Gelernter, author, *Mirror Worlds*

"[Dezenhall's] superb eye and ear at times call to mind such masters of the journalistic novel as Tom Wolfe."

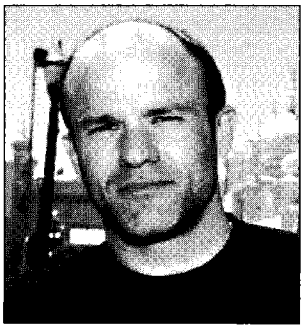
—*Time*

"Dezenhall nimbly skewers the Internet, journalists, politicians, and public-relations spinmeisters and their power to dupe huge numbers of people. Thoughtful, unpretentious, filled with laugh-out-loud funny scenes and delightfully realized characters. Place your bets on this winner."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

"The novel is a story about the fine line between politics and propriety, intermingling Mafioso tough guys and corporate suits. Include a supporting cast of press wizards, computer hackers, and geriatric gangsters, and you have Dezenhall's magic: a character study of the human condition, as aging immigrants yield to a new generation of corporate conformists. . . people that, though they themselves have committed criminal acts or lack Ivy League certification, personally appreciate the American experience."

—*The Jewish World Review*



Now in its third printing!

Published by St. Martin's Press
Available at bookstores and from online booksellers
www.moneywanders.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not, however, share his dismay at the prospect of millionaire kibbutzniks. The kibbutzim did make immense contributions to the state of Israel for very modest rewards. Their socialist dream was a mirage, but should we want to see them suffer for it? In contrast to what happened in so many other socialist arrangements around the world, no one but they paid the price for their illusions. I believe in private property, and the kibbutzniks' claim to ownership of the land based on the work they put into it is as good a principle as any I can think of for putting it in private hands.

I thought my article answered the question Werner Cohn asks, but let me try again. Many religious communes—the Hutterites, a strain of Anabaptists, are far from the only example—have flourished while practicing collective ownership as an aspect of their religious devotion. In contrast, communes established for the express purpose of practicing socialism have always collapsed, usually very soon after their founding. I infer that collectivism is not a comfortable way to live but is something people can put up with for a higher motivation, much like vows of poverty and celibacy taken by members of religious orders or like the extraordinary rules of self-denial practiced by the Amish (who are not, however, collectivists). In the case of the kibbutzim, I argued that the power of the Zionist dream served as the functional equivalent of a religious faith; once the heroic era of national rebirth was over, collective living was no longer bearable.

Illegitimacy

TO THE EDITOR:

James Q. Wilson is wrong in claiming that slavery contributed to the rampant rise in illegitimacy in the black community ["Sex and the Marriage Market," March]. In 1940, the first year for which such data exist, only 17 percent of the black children born in the United States were illegitimate. It was not until the mid-1960's that the black illegitimacy rate exceeded 25 percent, and 1976 marked the first year in which a majority of the black children born were illegitimate. Clearly, slavery has had nothing to do with this trend.

JOEL MARGOLIS
Albany, New York

JAMES Q. WILSON writes:

Joel Margolis should not content himself with a quick glance at the 1940 Census report but should do some real research. Steven Ruggles (*American Sociological Review*, 1994) reports that from 1880 through 1960, black children were two to three times as likely as white children to live with only one parent. Herbert Gutman's 1975 book, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, has city data that show pretty much the same thing—for 1860! S. Philip Morgan and his colleagues (*American Journal of Sociology*, 1993) find the same for 1910, as does Frank Furstenberg (*Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 1975) for the city of Philadelphia in 1850. Orlando Patterson's book, *Rituals of Blood* (1999), is a compelling account of how slavery affected blacks. Why does Mr. Margolis doubt what virtually every competent scholar has established?

Anti-Semitism

TO THE EDITOR:

Hillel Halkin has performed a valuable service in exploring new realities in "The Return of Anti-Semitism" [February]. Clearly, as Mr. Halkin cogently and indeed movingly demonstrates, 2002 is not 1952—or 1972 or even 1992. In his zeal to promote his grand thesis, however, Mr. Halkin suggests that in my own analyses of anti-Semitism in the United States I was "begging the question" on one small but important point: the nature of the relationship between anti-Israel and anti-Semitic attitudes.

A bit of contextualization is in order. First, the analysis referred to by Mr. Halkin was of data collected in 1990 by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) in its general social survey of 58 ethnic groups. These data were then "massaged" to elicit findings on anti-Semitism. It turned out that one of the more intriguing NORC findings concerned the relationship of anti-Israel and anti-Semitic attitudes. It has long been known that such attitudes are linked, and the nature of the linkage is immediately obvious to a sixth-grader: anti-Semitic attitudes are more common among those with negative attitudes toward Israel, and anti-Israel attitudes are stronger among those with anti-Semitic beliefs. According to NORC, however, at the end of the 1980's this linkage was *not* especially strong. My own sense is that, at that time, negative attitudes toward Israel on the part of Americans could very well have been related to causes other than anti-Semitism—a particular worldview, oil, views of Arabs and Muslims in general, and so forth.

In any case, the world has turned over many times since 1990. The question at this point is what the data show now, two years into the 21st century and under a new set of realities: the failed Oslo accords, the *intifada*, a range of unresolved international conflicts, terrorism, and the complete collapse of the peace process.

JEROME CHANES
Barnard College
New York City

HILLEL HALKIN writes:

I thank Jerome Chanes for his "contextualization." But even if negative attitudes toward Israel in the late 1980's resulted, as he says, from such things as "a particular worldview, oil, views of Arabs and Muslims in general, and so forth," a distinction still has to be made between negative attitudes toward specific Israeli policies, which need not have been anti-Semitic, and negative attitudes toward the existence of Israel, which were then, too—whatever the pretext for them—necessarily anti-Semitic. It would be interesting to know whether NORC's questionnaires polled for this.

Divorce

TO THE EDITOR:

Kay S. Hymowitz is clueless when it comes to family issues, as evidenced by her reply to Miklós Hernadi's letter ["Letters from Readers," March]. The idea that a woman's standard of living declines after divorce is a myth based on the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The American Philosophical Society
Scholarly Publishing since 1771

LEON ABBETT'S NEW JERSEY: THE EMERGENCE OF THE MODERN GOVERNOR

Richard A. Hogarty

A study of late 19th-century New Jersey governor Leon Abbett, a governor who both in crisis and in ordinary times was a policy and party leader. He was a forerunner to a type of governor that had not yet appeared on the American political stage.

Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society **Vol. 243**
$40 **ISBN: 0-87169-243-0**

❧ ❧ ❧

"Forget not Mee & My Garden . . ." SELECTED LETTERS, 1725-1768, OF PETER COLLINSON, F.R.S.

Edited and with an Introduction by Alan W. Armstrong

A selection of 187 letters of Peter Collinson, which Armstrong calls "vigorous, brisk, and emphatic." The letters are enhanced with more than 120 illustrations, many in color. The edition also contains notes and commentary for most letters.

Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society **Vol. 241**
$60 **ISBN: 0-87169-241-4**

❧ ❧ ❧

HISTORY OF THE PORTRAIT COLLECTION, INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Doris Devine Fanelli, Editor

A publication with Independence National Historical Park of the first catalog of portraits in the INHP collection. The book is divided into two sections—a history of the collection and a catalog—and is useful for museum staff, historians of American and art History, and visitors to Independence Historical National Park.

Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society **Vol. 242**
$65 (case) $50 (paper) **ISBN: 0-87169-242-2**

❧ ❧ ❧

METHODS AND STYLES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHEMISTRY

Joseph S. Fruton

A work that weaves together the history of scientific investigations, beginning with the influence of alchemy on early Greek numerology and philosophy, with social, religious, philosophical, and other events and practices that have contributed to the field of modern chemistry.

Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society **Vol. 245**
$40 **ISBN: 0-87169-245-7**

Upcoming titles:

***The Copepodologist's Cabinet: A Biographical and Bibliographical History*—David M. Damkaer (Memoirs, Vol. 240, $60, ISBN: 0-87169-240-6) Available May 2002**

***Under Heaven's Brow: Pre-Christian Religious Tradition in Chuuk*—Ward H. Goodenough (Memoirs, Vol. 246, $30, ISBN: 0-87169-246-5) Available May/June 2002.**

***The Drawings of Stefano da Verona and His Circle and the Origins of Collecting in Italy: A Catalogue Raisonné*—Evelyn Karet (Memoirs, Vol. 244, $40, ISBN: 0-87169-244-9) Available late Fall 2002.**

THE REALITIES OF IMAGES: IMPERIAL BRAZIL AND THE GREAT DROUGHT

Gerald Greenfield

Brazil's 1877 drought continues to haunt "Northeasterners," for whom the specter of periodic droughts is a cause and symbol of the region's underdevelopment.

Transactions of the American Philosophical Society **Vol. 91, Pt. 1**
$20 **ISBN: 0-87169-911-7**

❧ ❧ ❧

'FIGHTING THE GOOD CAUSE" Reflections on Francis Galton's Legacy to American Hereditarian Psychology

Gerald Sweeney

Sir Francis Galton was a mentor for educational psychologists who supplied crucial doctrine to American eugenics in its classic period, 1903–1930.

Transactions of the American Philosophical Society **Vol. 91, Pt. 2**
$20 **ISBN: 0-87169-912-5**

❧ ❧ ❧

"MY LIFE IN GERMANY BEFORE AND AFTER JANUARY 30, 1933": A GUIDE TO A MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION AT HOUGHTON LIBRARY

Harry Liebersohn and Dorothee Schneider

This collection of memoirs by refugees from Nazi Germany is a rich source of autobiographical information on the Nazi era and encompass a wide range of human experience.

Transactions of the American Philosophical Society **Vol. 91, Pt. 3**
$20 **ISBN: 0-87169-913-3**

❧ ❧ ❧

ALHACEN'S THEORY OF VISUAL PERCEPTION

A. Mark Smith

A two-volume work on the first three books of Alhacen's "De Aspectibus," the Medieval Latin version of Ibn al-Haytham's "Kitāb al-Manāzir" ("Book of Optics"). Volume One is the Introduction and the Latin text; Volume Two is the Englilsh translation.

Transactions of the American Philosophical Society **Vol. 91, Pts. 4 and 5**
$32 **ISBN: 0-87169-914-1**

❧ ❧ ❧

THE QUEEN MARY PSALTER: A STUDY OF AFFECT AND AUDIENCE

Anne Rudloff Stanton

Illuminated manuscripts are among the more intimate works of art surviving from the Medieval period, and the Queen Mary Psalter (c. 1316–1321) has long been recognized s one of the most outstanding English Gothic manuscripts.

Transactions of the American Philosophical Society **Vol. 91, Pts.6**
$32 **ISBN: 0-87169-916-8**

Book orders: American Philosophical Society, PO Box 481, Canton, MA 02021-0481 (tel: 800-821-7823; fax: 781-828-8915; e-mail: acadsvc@aol.com). See our web site for order form, manuscript submission information, and backlist: www.aps-pub.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mathematical mistakes and flawed analysis of Lenore Weitzman in her book, *The Divorce Revolution* (1985).

Marriage is the only contract in America in which the party breaking the contract gets rewarded. Under our "no-fault" divorce laws, women initiate the majority of divorces. Then, as the reward for breaking up their families, they receive tax-free child support from their ex-husbands.

This is why no-fault divorce laws should be repealed nationwide, and shared parenting should become the legal norm. Divorced mothers must know that they cannot count on getting the children. Each parent should get equal custody, thus eliminating the need for child support.

JOHN SMITH
Alliance for Non-Custodial Parents' Rights
Burbank, California

TO THE EDITOR:

In her reply to Miklós Hernadi, Kay S. Hymowitz cites with approval William J. Bennett's conclusion that "over time the average divorced man experiences an increase in his standard of living." This is absurd. Since my own divorce fourteen years ago—and I do not think my case is exceptional—child support has depleted my annual net income by more than half. My standard of living has certainly not increased; I can only dream of owning a home or saving a dime for retirement.

Kay Hymowitz has doubts about the joint custody of children, but she might have added that it cannot work if divorced fathers cannot afford residences with sufficient space for their children. Moreover, without regular contact, there is no psychological security for fathers, and children are deprived of the loving balance that only two parents can provide.

It is time to make divorce illegal until after children are out of the nest and living on their own. There is no other way to save them from being the pawns and meal-tickets of malicious divorced moms.

BOB BURK
Nashua, New Hampshire

TO THE EDITOR:

In saying that the financial situation of women tends to decline after divorce, Kay S. Hymowitz seems to have in mind only earned income. One cannot help wondering whether she has placed any value at all on the assets transferred to women upon divorce, including pensions, life-insurance policies, annuities, and the family residence.

ROBERT WHISTON
ManKind
London, England

TO THE EDITOR:

Kay S. Hymowitz's comments on the disparity between the financial status of men and women after divorce reflect outdated and debunked research. Sanford L. Braver, in his book *Divorced Dads: Shattering the Myths* (co-authored by Diane O'Connell), shows that although men and women have about the same standard of living for a short time after divorce, in the long term men are likely to have lower standards of living.

ART LEMASTERS
Cripple Creek, Colorado

TO THE EDITOR:

In her response to Miklós Hernadi's letter, Kay S. Hymowitz writes that his "endorsement of joint custody . . . ignores the considerable problems this arrangement can cause for children." Most fathers will strongly disagree. According to the most recent study on this subject, published in the *Journal of Family Psychology* (March 2002), "shared parenting" (joint custody) appears to be the best option for children after divorce. The study indicates that ongoing positive involvement with both parents helps children's behavior, school performance, and self-esteem.

MIKE MILLSPAUGH
Woodinville, Washington

KAY S. HYMOWITZ writes:

I have no question that the narrative that emerges from these letters—of wives who walk out of their marriages secure in the knowledge that the courts will give them the children, child support, and half the marital assets, thereby leaving husbands simultaneously broke and brokenhearted—is true in many cases. Yet all of us have heard other sorts of divorce stories as well: of the wife who needs "space" and no longer wants the children; of the husband who begins drinking, loses his job, and slams his wife against the wall; or—a perennial favorite—of the husband who falls for his twenty-five-year-old masseuse, starts a new family, and changes his will.

That said, we *can* make some generalizations about divorce, knowing that they do not cover every individual case. For one thing, we know that (as I pointed out in my previous response), though both men and women lose money when a marriage dissolves, divorce tends to be harder financially on women. Yes, as John Smith correctly observes, Lenore Weitzman's 1985 claim that the income of women drops 73 percent while that of men increases 42 percent was wildly inflated. But many other studies have reached the conclusion that divorced women have a rougher time financially than men. Sanford Braver's 1999 book *Divorced Dads* is, as far as I know, the only one to suggest that these studies fail to take taxes into account and that divorced men and women actually come out about the same once you make that correction. Perhaps in time Braver's findings will be confirmed, but it is important to note that he bases them on just 400 couples, hardly a comprehensive sample.

Just this year, Mavis Hetherington published *For Better or For Worse*, a study of 1,400 families, and concluded that "there is no denying that women['s] . . . income declines more sharply" than men's. True, as Robert Whiston would point out, Hetherington appears to be speaking only about income. But an astounding 20 percent of the mothers in her sample were in such dire straits they had to apply for public assistance, something they would be unlikely to do if they were sitting on significant assets.

Several of my correspondents seem to imply that joint custody is the only fair way to address the injustice suffered by many men. The more important question is how it works for children. In fact, the answer is encouraging. Mike Millspaugh notes Robert Bauserman's study in the March *Journal of Family*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Explore the storied realm of gods & heroes . . .

With *Classical Mythology*, a 24-lecture recorded course from The Teaching Company, home of The Great Courses

> ***"Dr. Vandiver is an excellent lecturer and a brilliant classics scholar."***
>
> —Charles F. Balz, Binghamton, NY

What makes Greek and Roman myths so strong and lasting? Why have their people and stories stirred so many thinkers and artists, from Aeschylus and Dante to James Joyce and Joseph Campbell?

Mythic themes and images—the labors of Hercules, the wrath of Achilles, the fall of Troy, the fearful journey to self-knowledge of Oedipus—ground our common culture, dramatize timeless human issues, and repay study with fresh harvests of insight.

They remain gripping even today, especially when taught by a gifted lecturer like Prof. Vandiver.

To enjoy Professor Elizabeth Vandiver's 24 half-hour lectures on *Classical Mythology*, call 1-800-TEACH-12 (1-800-832-2412) today. Or shop securely on-line at www.teach12.com.

Professor Vandiver has won high praise from our customers for her courses on Homer and Virgil. Her lectures are clear and vibrant, full of wisdom drawn from both time-honored and recent scholarship.

Professor Vandiver discusses leading theorists of myth, including Freud and Jung. She thoughtfully analyzes major story complexes such as the tales of the Trojan War and the legends of Theseus and Hercules. And she shows how, from

The Birth of Venus by Sandro Botticelli, c. 1482. Corel Stock Photo Library.

Shakespeare to *Star Wars*, these ancient stories live on.

You need no background in ancient languages, history, or culture. All you require is on the tapes or in the printed course guides that you get with them.

Put Learning at Your Fingertips with Recorded Lectures from The Teaching Company

The more than 100 Teaching Company lecture series make learning convenient and enjoyable. Use them to make your commute, your regular exercise, or your TV viewing into a captivating and enlightening experience.

Order today and find out why the *New York Times* calls us "a force in adult education." A wealth of high-powered, university-level learning can be yours for just a few dollars per lecture.

This course is offered in audio and video, and works well in both. The video version contains more than 30 images, as well as other graphics to aid your learning.

America's Best College Lecturers

The Teaching Company scours America for the best college lecturers, as identified by teaching awards and top marks in independent student evaluations.

THE COURSE CURRICULUM

PART I *(Lectures 1–12)*
Introduction . . . What Is Myth? . . . Why Is Myth? . . . "First Was Chaos" . . . The Reign of the Olympians . . . Immortals and Mortals . . . Demeter, Persephone, and the Conquest of Death . . . The Eleusinian Mysteries and the Afterlife . . . Apollo and Artemis . . . Hermes and Dionysos . . . Laughter-Loving Aphrodite . . . Culture, Prehistory, and the "Great Goddess"

PART II *((Lectures 13–24)*
Humans, Heroes, and Half-Gods . . . Theseus and the "Test-and-Quest" Myth . . . From Myth to History and Back Again . . . The Greatest Hero of All . . . The Trojan War . . . The Terrible House of Atreus . . . Blood Vengeance, Justice, and the Furies . . . The Tragedies of King Oedipus . . . Monstrous Females and Female Monsters . . . Roman Founders, Roman Fables . . . "Gods Are Useful" . . . From Ovid to the Stars

SAVE UP TO $145!
OFFER GOOD UNTIL JULY 31, 2002

No-Risk Money-Back Guarantee!

About Your Professor:

ELIZABETH VANDIVER (Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin, 1990) teaches classics and serves as co-director of the Honors Program in the Humanities at the University of Maryland. In 1998, she received the American Philological Association's Excellence in Teaching Award, the most prestigious teaching prize available to American classicists. Her other courses for the Teaching Company include **Greek Tragedy** and ***The* Aeneid *of Virgil.***

Shop securely on-line at:
www.teach12.com

To order, mail coupon below or call our toll-free number: (Please refer to Priority Code 12982)

1-800-TEACH-12 (1-800-832-2412) Fax: 703-378-3819

The Teaching Company
4151 Lafayette Center Drive, Suite 100
Chantilly, VA 20151-1232
www.teach12.com

Priority Code 12982

Please send me **Classical Mythology,** which consists of 24 half-hour lectures, with complete lecture outlines.

- ❑ **Audio $34.95** (reg. price $129.95) **SAVE $95!** plus $10 shipping, handling, and guarantee.
- ❑ **Video $54.95** (reg. price $199.95) **SAVE $145!** plus $10 shipping, handling, and guarantee.
- ❑ **CD $49.95** (reg. price $179.95) **SAVE $130!** plus $10 shipping, handling, and guarantee.
- ❑ **Check or Money Order enclosed**

**Additional international shipping charges may apply*
***Virginia residents please add 4.5% sales tax.*

❑ **Charge my:** *(please check desired format)*

❑ VISA ❑ MasterCard ❑ Discover ❑ American Express

Account Number

Signature Exp. Date

Name (please print)

Mailing Address

City/State/Zip

Phone *(If we have questions regarding your order)*

❑ **FREE CATALOG.** Please send me a free copy of your current catalog (no purchase necessary).

Offer Good Through: July 31, 2002

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Psychology showing that children in joint custody have both fewer behavioral and emotional problems, and higher self-esteem. What he does not mention is that Bauserman is careful to say that there is no evidence of a causal relationship between joint physical custody and better adjustment for the children. In fact, what seems to be at the root of their better adjustment is not joint custody per se but their close relationship with their fathers. Insofar as joint custody facilitates that closeness, it is doubtless a good thing.

But courts cannot decree closeness by imposing joint custody on unwilling parents, nor can they stop couples from battling daily over everything from whether their eight-year-old may stay up to watch David Letterman to whether she should play Little League to what religion she should practice—conflicts that cannot be good for children. Though Bauserman does not speculate, it seems reasonable to assume that parents who agree to joint custody do so in part because they already have a decent working relationship; this cooperation would then be an additional source of the improved outcomes for children that he noted in his study.

In any case, courts cannot do anything about the fact that, no matter how cooperative the parents, joint custody is highly problematic for very young children. Infants need a secure attachment to a primary caretaker, usually the mother, and I would argue that this need outweighs, though it in no way denies, the importance of a close relationship with a father.

I get the feeling that some of my correspondents will not rest until we all admit that in divorce men have it worse than women. My own view is that divorce is an equal-opportunity tormentor, and that arguing who suffers more, men or women, makes no more sense than debating which is worse, cancer or heart disease.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pulliam

2003

The Pulliam Journalism Fellowship

GANNETT

Jump-start your journalism career with a solid program that boasts four Pulitzer Prize winners among its alumni – the Pulliam Journalism Fellowship. The Fellowship offers myriad career opportunities; in fact, a Pulliam Fellow from our first class of 1974, Barbara Henry, now serves as president and publisher of *The Indianapolis Star*.

Now entering its 30th year, the 2003 Pulliam Journalism Fellowship helps build a bridge from the classroom to the newsroom. Fellows are assigned to *The Indianapolis Star* or *The Arizona Republic* in Phoenix for 10 weeks each summer as staff reporters. We award 20 Fellowships annually.

We'd like to encourage applications from students with a wide variety of backgrounds. Previous internships and part-time experience at a newspaper are desired or other demonstration of writing and reporting ability. Those who go through the Fellowship often find new professional opportunities opening up at other newspapers during and after the program. Past Fellows now serve as newspaper publishers, editors and reporters all over the world.

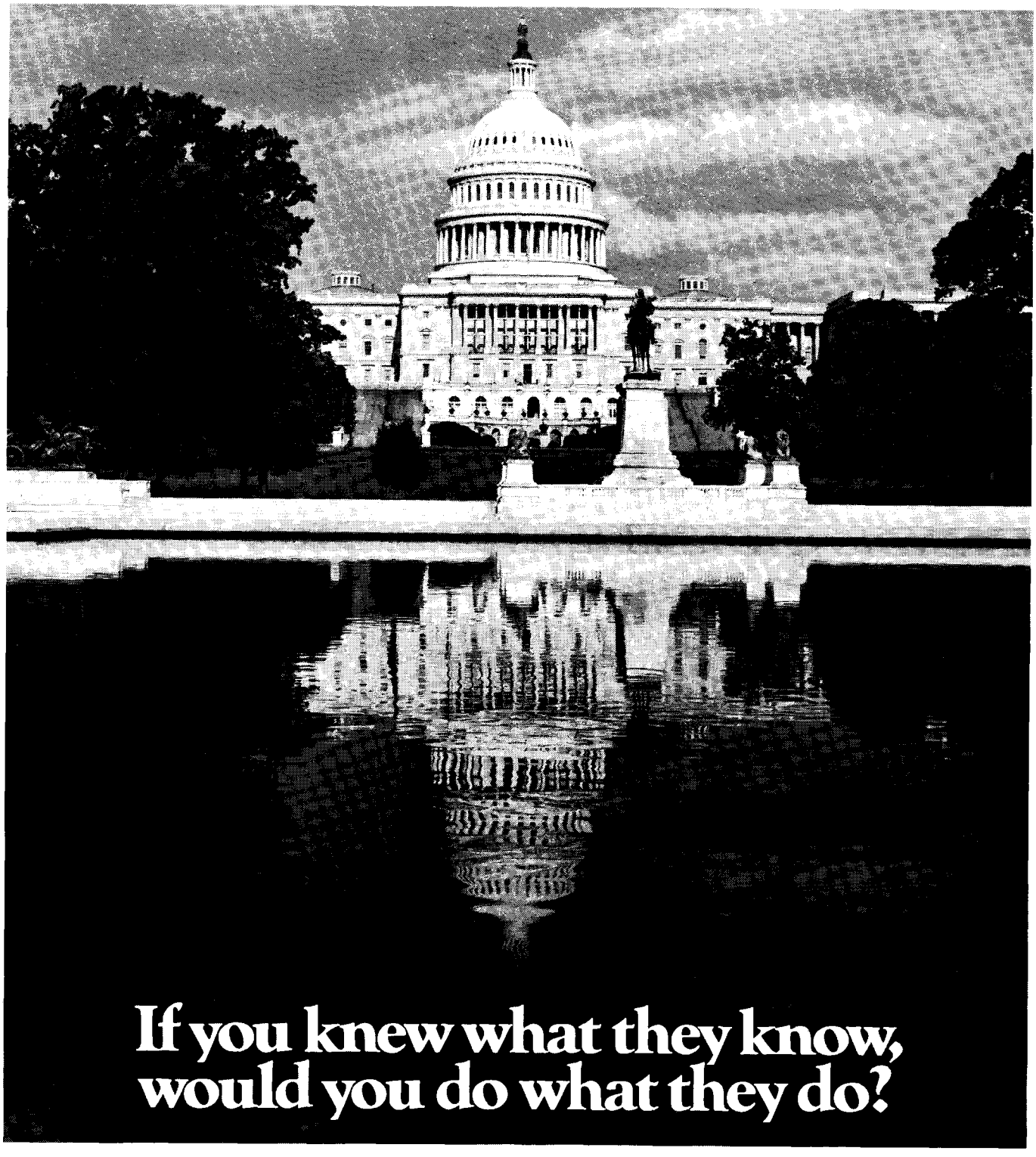
Traditionally, our Fellowships have been open only to graduating college seniors. In 2001, we expanded eligibility to include college sophomores and juniors, as well as seniors pursuing a career in newspaper journalism.

Contact us anytime after Sept. 1, 2002, for an application packet for our Summer 2003 program. Our early admissions deadline is Nov. 15, 2002, with up to five winners notified by Dec. 15, 2002. Non-winning early admissions applicants will be reconsidered with all later entries, which must be postmarked by March 1, 2003. Winners from this group will be notified by April 1, 2003. The stipend for the 10 weeks will be $6,300.

Visit our Web site at http://www.indystar.com/pjf or e-mail Fellowship Director Russell B. Pulliam at russell.pulliam@indystar.com for an application packet. You also may request a packet by writing:

Russell B. Pulliam, Director
The Pulliam Journalism Fellowship
P.O. Box 145
Indianapolis, IN 46206-0145

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



If you knew what they know, would you do what they do?

More than any other single force on earth, America's foreign policy will determine what kind of world we and our children live in.

And every one of us can influence that policy. That's what the nonprofit, nonpartisan Foreign Policy Association is all about: working

groups, classrooms and community centers—participated in our *Great Decisions* program.

The *Great Decisions* book provides objective background on eight key foreign policy issues.

Discussions help you form your views; you

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary
June 2002

Israel and the Anti-Semites

Gabriel Schoenfeld

Has a new and potent form of anti-Semitism come to life in the world? If so, what does it portend?

Let us for the moment bracket off the Muslim world. The evidence of anti-Jewish hatred in that immense pocket of humanity has been copiously documented and is simply too overwhelming to warrant extended discussion. The more interesting question concerns Europe—a continent, it was widely assumed, effectively inoculated against a toxin that a mere half-century ago had reduced it to ruin and that, in the decades since World War II, had been confined to obscure recesses of political life.

Events over the past months suggest otherwise. It was only this past February that Hillel Halkin, writing in Commentary about an "accumulating record of actual anti-Semitic incidents" around the world, cautioned that evidence of a substantial resurgence in Europe was so far only "circumstantial." Since then, the continental landscape has begun to shift with astonishing speed.

The immediate occasion for the shift was, of course, Israel's incursion into the West Bank in late March and April. That military operation was precipitated by the daily terror within Israel itself that had been going on for many months and that culminated in the bombing of a hotel ballroom in Netanya in which 29 Israelis perished and more than 140 were injured while sitting at their seder tables on the first night of Passover. To put an end to this relentless campaign of terror, Israel's national-unity government dispatched the army into Palestinian cities and camps to uncover and destroy bomb factories and to apprehend those responsible for the mass killings of Israeli civilians. "In the month of March, we lost the lives of more than 126 persons," explained Israel's dovish foreign minister, Shimon Peres; "we did not have any other alternative."

Though the incursion did not achieve all of its objectives, one visible result, at least as long as Israel's forces remained in place, was the near-total cessation of terrorist attacks inside the country. Another was the seizure of a trove of intelligence information, including documents confirming (to anyone who still doubted it) that Yasir Arafat, Israel's ostensible partner in the Oslo peace process and a man richly subsidized by the European Union, was in possession of arms forbidden to him by the Oslo accords and was personally funding and directing the civilian bombing missions of at least one armed unit, the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade.

That sectors of Europe would be critical of *any* Israeli military action against Arafat's Palestinian Authority, even one so self-evidently defensive in character, was hardly a surprise; the cause of Palestinian statehood is, after all, a cherished item on the European diplomatic and political agenda. But the scale and the venom of the reaction, on both the elite and the popular level, were something else again. At least we can now see things as they are.

Gabriel Schoenfeld *is the senior editor of* Commentary.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LET US begin at the popular level, where there has been, first of all, a rash of *physical* attacks on Jewish symbols, Jewish institutions, and Jews themselves. The list of such violent incidents from the first two weeks of April alone is too long to summarize adequately.

In the Ukrainian capital of Kiev, for example, some 50 youths chanting "Kill the Jews" descended on a synagogue on a Saturday evening, broke twenty windows, and beat the rector of the religious school with stones. In Greece, Jewish cemeteries were vandalized in what the press termed "anti-Jewish acts of revenge," and the Holocaust memorial in Salonika, a city whose 50,000 Jews were rounded up and deported to Nazi death camps in 1943, was defaced with Palestinian slogans. In Slovakia, Jewish cemeteries were desecrated in what an official described as the "biggest attack on the Jewish community since the Holocaust."

In peaceful, democratic, law-abiding Western Europe—a part of the world that for the past half-century has prided itself on the degree of personal safety it affords its inhabitants—the story was similar. One scene of violent anti-Israel demonstrations was Holland, where protestors hurled rocks and bottles and small roving bands used stones and bicycles to shatter store windows in the heart of Amsterdam. In neighboring Belgium, five firebombs were tossed into a synagogue in a working-class district of Brussels, and a Jewish bookstore was severely damaged by arsonists; a synagogue in Antwerp was firebombed with Molotov cocktails, and in the same city a travel agency specializing in trips to Israel was also set alight.

In Germany, two Orthodox Jews were beaten while strolling on Berlin's chic Kurfuerstendamm, the heart of the city's shopping district. A woman wearing a star-of-David necklace was attacked in the subway. Jewish memorials in Berlin were defaced with swastikas; a synagogue was spray-painted with the words, "Six Million Is Not Enough. PLO." Anti-Israel demonstrators hurled bricks through windows as they marched.

In England, reported the London *Express*, "race-hate attacks on the Jewish community have soared." In the first ten days of April there were fifteen anti-Semitic incidents, including eight physical assaults. Most of the attacks in England were on Jews walking alone, set upon and beaten by small roving bands. At least two of the victims required hospitalization.

France was the epicenter of aggression. Gangs of hooded men descended on Jewish victims and struck them with iron clubs. Buses carrying Jewish schoolchildren were stoned. Cemeteries were desecrated. Synagogues, Jewish schools, student facilities, and kosher stores were defaced, battered, and firebombed. On April 1, the Or Aviv synagogue in Marseille was burned to the ground, its prayer-books and Torah scrolls consumed by flames; it was one of five synagogues in France attacked. The first half of the month saw "nearly 360 crimes against Jews and Jewish institutions," according to the French interior ministry—amounting, in the words of the *New York Times*, to "the worst spate of anti-Jewish violence" in France since World War II.

Some observers have drawn comparisons between this violent crime wave and Kristallnacht—the pogrom unleashed by the Nazis against German Jews on November 9 and 10, 1938. Unlike in the 1930's, however, there was no organized power behind the assaults, let alone a government, and in every European country the police, so far as one knows, did their duty (though the political authorities often stood aside until matters threatened to get out of control). Still, physical violence against Jews has undeniably become a pan-European phenomenon, visible in every country north and south, east and west. Everywhere one turns, moreover, this physical violence has been accompanied, and abetted, by an explosion of *verbal* violence.

The themes are also the same everywhere. Israel, a country victimized by terrorism, stands accused of perpetrating terrorism; the Jews, having suffered the most determined and thoroughgoing genocide in history, stand accused of perpetrating genocide. The language in which these accusations are leveled is extravagantly hateful, drawn from the vocabulary of World War II and the Holocaust but entirely and grotesquely inverted, with the Jews as Nazis and their Arab tormentors in the role of helpless Jews.

Still sticking to the popular level, events in early April were once again particularly instructive. In the course of two weeks, anti-Israel street demonstrations took place not only in every major European capital but in hundreds of minor cities and towns. In Tuzla, a town in Bosnia, some 1,500 demonstrators carried placards reading "Sharon and Hitler, Two Eyes in the Same Head" and "Israel—the Real Face of Terrorism." In Dublin, Ireland, the banners, several featuring Nazi swastikas superimposed over stars of David, read "Stop the Palestinian Holocaust" and "Jerusalem: Forever Beloved, Forever Palestinian." In Barcelona, Spain, demonstrators carried placards inscribed "Israel Murderer; USA Accomplice," and "No to Genocide." In Paris, the posters read "Hitler Has a Son:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sharon"; in Belgium, "Hitler Had Two Sons: Bush and Sharon." In Salonika, a solidarity concert was staged under the slogan: "Stop the Genocide Now—We Are All Palestinians." In Bilbao, Spain, thousands marched through the streets chanting "No to Zionist terrorism." In Berlin, the placards read "Stop the Genocide in Palestine" and "Sharon is a Child Murderer." In cities and towns across France, "Death to Jews" and "Jews—murderers" were refrains heard at a multitude of rallies.

THE CATALOG is infinitely expandable, for not only is it incomplete in itself but the passage of each day has brought new acts of violence, new demonstrations, and new and more vicious slogans. Who is behind all this street-level activity?

Actual physical violence against Jews has been, for the most part, the work of Muslims. According to the French ministry of the interior, the perpetrators have generally been "Arab youths from North African countries." Arriving from societies where hatred of Jews is fostered by government, government-controlled media, and radical clerics, these immigrants are fed a rich and stimulating diet from the Arab and European Arab-language press, whose brand of anti-Semitism is as hallucinatory as anything ever peddled by Julius Streicher in the Nazi organ *Der Stürmer*.

Some of this fare stems ultimately from Saudi Arabia, a great and unceasing fount of wild anti-Jewish vitriol. *Al-Riyadh*, a government-controlled newspaper in that country, has, for example, parlayed a twist on an ancient libel to excite and terrify its readers—the Jewish use of the blood of Gentile adolescents not for Passover matzah but for Purim pastry:

> Let us now examine how the victims' blood is spilled. For this, a needle-studded barrel is used; this is a kind of barrel, about the size of the human body, with extremely sharp needles set in it on all sides. [These needles] pierce the victim's body, from the moment he is placed in the barrel.
>
> These needles do the job, and the victim's blood drips from him very slowly. Thus, the victim suffers dreadful torment—torment that affords the Jewish vampires great delight as they carefully monitor every detail of the blood-shedding with pleasure and love that are difficult to comprehend.*

And so forth. The lesson that readers are supposed to draw from this ghastly fantasy is likewise inflammatory: a Saudi cleric enjoined his Muslim brothers in a recent government-sponsored sermon "not to have any mercy or compassion on the Jews, their blood, their money, their flesh. Their women are yours to take, legitimately. God made them yours. Why don't you enslave their women? Why don't you wage jihad? Why don't you pillage them?"

The fact that Islamic immigrants are behind most of the physical attacks on European Jews hardly suggests that the problem is easily containable. Thanks to Europe's welcoming immigration policies, and to their own high fertility, Muslims are now a significant demographic factor on the continent. If in 1945 they numbered fewer than a million, today they are more than fifteen million, with some two million in England, more than four-and-a-half million in France, three million in Germany, nearly a million apiece in Italy, Spain, and Holland, and the remainder scattered across more than a dozen other countries. They are, of course, a heterogeneous population, and most of them are no doubt neither in the grip of radical Islam nor susceptible to appeals to violence. But some significant number of them are, and the challenge they pose can only grow.

In any case, if Muslims have taken the lead in perpetrating physical violence, others have enthusiastically joined in or blazed the way when it comes to incitement and verbal abuse. The various demonstrations illustrate this well. Thus, at the event in Dublin, organized by a group known as the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign, half the demonstrators were reportedly Irishmen. Similarly, in Brussels, not only Arab students but representatives of Belgian social and political organizations took part, including the Catholic movement Pax Christi, the Belgian Socialist party, and the Belgian Green party. The solidarity concert in Salonika was organized by, among others, two Greek trade-union bodies; the dean of Athens University also lent his support, issuing a statement condemning Israel for its "continuing cruel violation in Palestine of human rights." In Barcelona, where some 10,000 people turned out, unions, political parties, and nongovernmental organizations campaigned against Israeli "genocide" and set fire to a star of David. In France, at the rallies where chants of "death to the Jews" were heard, one could find, according to Agence France Presse, not only the Muslim Students of France and the Committee of Moroccan Workers but also officials of various trade unions and members of the Revolutionary Communist

* Translated by the Middle East Media Research Institute, available at www.memri.org.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

League, the Greens, and the French Communist party, along with officials of the Human Rights League. In the front ranks was José Bové, the French Luddite formerly known for vandalizing McDonald's hamburger outlets.

BUT THESE events at street level are only the beginning; it is in the world of politics and elite opinion that the nature of the burgeoning movement of European anti-Semitism becomes fully clear. And anti-Semitism is, incidentally, the right and the only word for an anti-Zionism so one-sided, so eager to indict Israel while exculpating Israel's adversaries, so shamefully adroit in the use of moral double standards, so quick to issue false and baseless accusations, and so disposed to invert the language of the Holocaust and to paint Israelis and Jews as evil incarnate.

A mild (in relative terms) expression of this current could be found in a petition being circulated among European academics. Passing over in silence the suicide bombings that were devastating Israeli civilian life, not to mention the eighteen months of unremitting violence that were Arafat's answer to Prime Minister Ehud Barak's offer of 97 percent of the territory of the West Bank and the division of Jerusalem, the statement denounced *Israel's* government as "impervious to moral appeals" and then called for a moratorium on grants by European educational institutions to Israeli scholars and researchers. (The reason, one assumes, was their tacit complicity in genocide.) Among the hundreds of signers of this meretricious document were scholars from institutions of higher learning in virtually every country of the continent, including the famed British Darwinist, Richard Dawkins.

Similarly in Norway, where in 1994 the Nobel committee had awarded its peace prize to Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, and Yasir Arafat. At that time, one honest member of the committee, Kaare Kristiansen, had resigned in protest, rightly calling Arafat a terrorist unworthy of this award. Now, however, other members, one of them a Lutheran bishop, said they wanted to strip not Arafat but Shimon Peres of the prize; his crime—participating in a government that was violating the "intention and spirit" of the award. Not to be outdone, the leader of the Socialist Left party demanded reparations from Israel for destroying Palestinian infrastructure paid for by Norwegian aid money—never mind that this sort of subsidized "infrastructure" regularly shelters armed Palestinian terrorists and their activities.

In Denmark, a Lutheran bishop delivered a sermon in Copenhagen Cathedral likening Ariel Sharon to the biblical King Herod, who ordered the death of all male children in Bethlehem under the age of two; Denmark's foreign minister, Per Stig Moller, branded Israel's anti-terror incursion a "war against a civilian population." The Portuguese writer Jose Saramago, a Nobel laureate in literature, delivered himself of this delicacy: "We can compare what is happening on the Palestinian territories with Auschwitz."

In Germany, Norbert Bluem, a minister under former chancellor Helmut Kohl, called Israel's offensive in the West Bank a "limitless war of annihilation," while Juergen Moellemann, an official of the Free Democrats, openly *defended* Palestinian violence against Jews: "I would resist too, and use force to do so . . . not just in my country but in the aggressor's country as well." Wrote one commentator in the *Suddeutsche Zeitung*: "It's been a long time since the hatred of Jews—once disguised as anti-Zionism—has been as socially acceptable in Germany as it is today."

In Italy, *La Stampa*, the liberal daily, resurrected the oldest Christian anti-Semitic canard of all: deicide. A cartoon depicted the infant Jesus looking up from his manger at an Israeli tank and pleading, "Don't tell me they want to kill me again." From voices in the Vatican, utter indifference to the murder of Jews was coupled with the charge that the Jews themselves were committing genocide. "Indescribable barbarity" was the phrase of Franciscan officials in Rome describing Israel's attempt to arrest Palestinian terrorists who had taken shelter in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. In the hallowed "land of Jesus," complained the Vatican daily *L'Osservatore Romano*, Israel was exhibiting an "irritating haughtiness" and engaging in "aggression that turns into extermination."

If France has led Europe in anti-Semitic violence, Great Britain may be where the elite expression of anti-Semitic ideas has been most uninhibited. (In his February COMMENTARY article, Hillel Halkin memorably quoted the columnist Petronella Wyatt: "Since September 11, anti-Semitism and its open expression has become respectable at London dinner tables.") Thus, Claire Rayner, the president of the British Humanist Association, asserted in April that the notion of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people was "a load of crap"; by contrast, the suicide bombings of Israeli restaurants and buses were both understandable and justifiable: "If you treat a group of people the way Palestinians have been treated they will use the only weapon they have, which is their individual lives."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

More established figures voiced sentiments fully as bizarre as Claire Rayner's and, if anything, nastier. Last autumn, the highly-regarded British novelist and biographer A.N. Wilson had "reluctantly" announced in the (London) *Evening Standard* that the state of Israel no longer had a right to exist. More recently, he used his talents to accuse the Israeli army of the "poisoning of water supplies" on the West Bank, thereby availing himself of another time-honored canard, traceable back to the 14th century and repeated on countless occasions since then to justify the mass murder of Jews.

Wilson is a self-described "unbelieving Anglican" who is certainly well aware of the shameful history of Christian religious anti-Semitism to which he was now making his own signal contribution. Tom Paulin is a professor at Oxford, an arts commentator for the British Broadcasting Corporation, and a poet whose recent verse includes a lament for a small Palestinian boy "gunned down by the Zionist SS." "I never believed that Israel had the right to exist at all," Paulin told the Egyptian *al-Ahram Weekly* in April, and Jews from Brooklyn who have settled in the West Bank "are Nazis, racists. . . . They should be shot dead."

To *al-Ahram*, Paulin is that "rare thing in contemporary British culture, 'the writer as conscience.'" Some Europeans apparently agree with this judgment. The *Irish Times* found him "a rigorous respecter of language" who "does not dilute his words" while remaining free of any trace of personal prejudice. Chiming in, A.N. Wilson called him a "brilliant scholar and literary critic" and noted that "many in this country and throughout the world would echo his views on the tragic events in the Middle East."

On this last point, at least, Wilson may be right. One could devote many more pages to, for example, the malevolent mythmaking of the British and European press in reporting on the "massacre" of Palestinians in Jenin, where the Israelis aimed for "the near-total destruction of the lives and livelihoods of the camp's 15,000 inhabitants," according to the *Evening Standard*. A "crime of especial notoriety," blared the *Guardian* about an operation that cost the lives of over two dozen Israeli reservists in an effort, successful but hideously costly, to eliminate terrorists while *avoiding* civilian Palestinian casualties. Or one could dwell on the reflexive hatred of the Jewish state that now appears to be rife within the Anglican Church: "Whenever I print anything sympathetic to Israel," admits the editor of the church's official newspaper, "I get deluged with complaints that I am Zionist and racist." Or one could quote again from the many examples adduced by Halkin and freely available in the public prints and on the web. But we must once again move on.

The Palestinians who insisted that there was an Israeli massacre in Jenin surely had their reasons for fabricating such a claim. Those reasons are no doubt related to hatred of Jews per se—for such hatred exists, abundantly. But they are also closely related to the tactics of the Palestinian struggle, which has successfully relied on the readiness of many in Europe (and elsewhere) to accept such fabrications at face value, to spread and amplify them while ignoring all contrary evidence, and to pillory Israel on the basis of lies that they themselves have tended and fed.

Where this eager readiness comes from is another question. A considerable literature has been devoted to plumbing the nature of Europe's enduring "Jewish problem," and the current flare-up has already given rise to a fresh round of theorizing about its root causes, old and new. Among the factors regularly adduced, at least by those willing to acknowledge that it *is* a problem, are the seemingly indelible brand that has been left on European consciousness by centuries of ubiquitous anti-Semitic myths; hatreds rooted in Christian theological concepts; a deep-seated psychological need to lighten the burden of European guilt for the Holocaust by defaming its victims posthumously; a no less pressing need to atone for European colonialism and imperialism by casting Israel as the world's worst colonial power; and on and on. One can spin more theories with ease and find evidence to support each of them, for anti-Semitism is a disease with no single cause.

But one salient fact about the picture I have been painting is this: there is a clear fit between anti-Israel or anti-Jewish hatred and the general ideological predispositions of the contemporary European Left. As historical trends go, this is relatively new. For most of the last century, what predominated in Europe was the racialist and nationalist anti-Semitism of the Right, fused with and colored by Christian theological teachings. Today, though the neo-Nazis and the Holocaust deniers occupy their accustomed place, and though anti-Semites figure among the constituents of Jorg Haider in Austria and Jean-Marie Le Pen in France, the anti-Semitism in swiftest motion is the left-wing strain, the strain that loathes the Jews not on explicitly racialist or religious grounds but on "universalist" ones.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This tradition, too, has a long and ignoble history, from the Enlightenment's Voltaire (who regarded the Jews as "the most abominable people in the world") through socialism's Karl Marx (to whom Polish Jews were the "filthiest of all races"), through seven decades of Soviet Communism with its pro-Arab foreign policy and its harshly oppressive attitude toward Soviet Jewish citizens, through the New Left, through the German and Italian terrorism of recent decades and the post-60's alignment of the Left with the cause of Palestinian "liberation." Today, a new chapter is being written. There are, to be sure, neo-Nazis to be found among those burning the star of David and chanting obscene slogans against the Jewish state in the streets of Europe; but the ranks are more heavily composed of environmentalists, pacifists, anarchists, anti-globalists, and socialists. "I have difficulties with the swastika," said a member of Belgium's Flemish-Palestine Committee at an April demonstration, registering by his perturbance the anomaly of that Nazi symbol amid the placards of his ideological comrades.

The pattern continues in the upper reaches of European politics. True, anti-Semitic impulses cannot always be readily disentangled from the many other considerations that govern political behavior—like raw electoral calculations in a continent with many Muslims and (except for France) very few Jews. But surely it is significant that among Europe's governing bodies, it is the political Left that has been leading the charge against Israel. It was Germany's Social Democratic-Green coalition government that this past April, in the midst of Israel's battle for survival, and despite its much vaunted "special relationship" with the Jewish state, opted to halt further exports of spare parts for the Merkava tank. It was France's socialist foreign minister, Hubert Vedrine, who in April publicly castigated American Jews for being so "intransigent" as to fail to make "the switch toward peace." When the European Parliament passed a resolution on April 10 calling for trade sanctions against Israel, it was propelled forward by Europe's Liberal Democrat and Green parties, with the Socialists denouncing Israel in the most perfervid tones of all.

If one moves even higher up the rungs of political life, into the multilateral institutions that shape the world polity and in which the Europeans have invested so much of their diplomatic capital, the die is cast from the same mold. (The degree to which the United Nations has turned itself into an anti-Semitic mob warrants an extended essay of its own.) Thus, when the UN Human Rights Commission passed a resolution in April condemning Israel for "war crimes," "acts of mass killing," and an "offense against humanity," while simultaneously backing without reservation the "right of the Palestininas to resist," the European countries voting in favor included the socialist or Left-coalition governments of France, Belgium, Sweden, and Portugal, with centrist Spain and right-wing Austria joining in. Outside of Europe, needless to say, every left-wing dictatorship in the world voted in support of the resolution, including that shining protector of human rights, the People's Republic of China.

It would be unfair to leave the subject of Europe without noting the courageous efforts of those in England, France, Italy, and Germany who have stood up to or spoken back to the anti-Semites. Perhaps foremost among them lately has been the Italian writer Oriana Fallaci, who in a lengthy and impassioned indictment published in the weekly *Panorama* declared, in part:

> I find it shameful . . . that state-run television stations [in Italy] contribute to the resurgent anti-Semitism, crying only over Palestinian deaths while playing down Israeli deaths, glossing over them in unwilling tones. I find it shameful that in their debates they host with much deference the scoundrels with turbans or kaffiyehs who yesterday sang hymns to the slaughter in New York and today sing hymns to the slaughters in Jerusalem, in Haifa, in Netanya, in Tel Aviv. I find it shameful that the press does the same, that it is indignant because Israeli tanks surround the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, that it is not indignant because inside that same church 200 Palestinian terrorists well armed with machine guns and munitions and explosives (among them are various leaders of Hamas and al-Aqsa) are not unwelcome guests of the monks (who then accept bottles of mineral water and jars of honey from the soldiers of those tanks).

But these exceptions are notorious because they are exceptions. Elsewhere, and especially on the cultural and political Left, Europeans have tended to speak in a very different voice.

WHAT ABOUT here, in the United States? Mercifully, anti-Semitism on these shores lacks Europe's rich traditionalism. Violent attacks on Jews have been exceedingly rare in our history, and although genuine social movements have at times been built—most famously by Father Charles E. Coughlin in the 1930's—on anti-Jewish hostility, the few attempts to harness this hostility to electoral

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

purposes have all come to naught. The question is, under what circumstances might this change?

One relatively new factor in the American equation, as in the European, is a sizable Muslim influx. Reliable numbers remain hard to come by: a U.S. Department of State fact sheet offers a figure of six million, which is almost certainly much too high, while other estimates range from two to four million. But there is no disagreement that the Muslim population has grown dramatically in recent decades, or that this growth has already affected Jewish security. If physical attacks on Jews and Jewish institutions once came mostly from right-wing or nativist groups, now they come increasingly from Arab militants. One of the most well-known such attacks was the murder of Ari Halberstam, a hasidic schoolboy, shot in 1994 by Arab gunmen while traversing the Brooklyn Bridge.

The years since 1995—years in which, according to the Anti-Defamation League's annual survey, anti-Semitism as a whole declined in America—also witnessed an upsurge of violent incidents connected to the Middle East and in most cases perpetrated by Arabs. This was especially pronounced after the beginning of the latest *intifada* in September 2000. Within months, at least 34 incidents—primarily vandalism and arson but including physical attacks on individuals—were reported in New York State alone.

Heightened security after September 11 seems to have brought about a decrease in violence of this kind, but lately the pace has picked up again. In Berkeley, California, for example, "Jewish residents have been attacked on the streets," the *Daily Californian* reported in late April. The university's Hillel society building was defaced with anti-Semitic graffiti, and the city's largest synagogue has received a stream of threats, including one in which a telephone caller said that all Jews should be "annihilated" and "holocausted." The mayor has proposed creating a special police unit to deal with the rash of death threats against Jews and bomb scares at synagogues.

BUT MENTION of Berkeley, one of the most advanced academic locales in the country, should remind us that no more than in Europe are anti-Semitic attitudes here limited to Arabs or Muslims, or to the uneducated. Rather, they have found a home in what are presumably the most enlightened precincts of society. "Die Jew. Die, die, die, die, die, die. Stop living, die, die, DIE! Do us all a favor and build yourself [an] . . . oven," were the words in a student newspaper at Rutgers. "How have Judaism, the Jews, and the international forces all permitted Zionism to become a wild, destructive beast capable of perpetrating atrocities?" are the words of a tenured professor of sociology at Georgetown, a leading American university. In many elite universities, radical professors have joined with Arab students to compel their institutions to divest from the "apartheid" state of Israel. One need only scan the dozens of names of distinguished faculty sponsors of such initiatives to grasp that a significant movement is gathering force.*

The political address of this movement is once again on the Left. True, the nefarious reach of "world Zionism" has long been a favorite theme of American white supremacists like David Duke, just as it has been of the British Holocaust-denier David Irving. But even in its more genteel incarnations, as in the now-marginalized Patrick J. Buchanan, this brand of anti-Semitism is in relative eclipse, whereas on the Left it has become the glue of a new coalition. The environmentalists and anarchists who in past years satisfied themselves by hurling rocks through the windows of Starbucks coffee shops have now joined forces with Arab radicals to calumniate the Jewish state. "Hey, hey! Ho, ho! IMF has got to go!" was one slogan at an April rally in Washington, D.C. The other was "Sharon and Hitler are the same. Only difference is the name."

Among the most active elements of the Left-Arab alliance are, sad to say, a number of Jews. For years, figures like Noam Chomsky and his acolyte Norman Finkelstein have traded in extreme denunciations of Israel, to relatively little effect.† Of late, they are finding greater traction. The principal activity of a new organization called Jews for Peace in Palestine and Israel is organizing rallies in support of the PLO. "There are many American Jews who are flat-out embarrassed by the fact the prime minister of Israel is guilty of war crimes," says its executive director, Josh Ruebner. Rabbi Michael Lerner, editor of *Tikkun* magazine, and dozens of his associates, including Chomsky and such non-Jewish luminaries as the black activist professor Cornel West, recently placed a full-page ad in the *New York Times* in which, in classical anti-Semitic form, either Ariel Sharon or one of his "supporters" was presented in a cartoon caricature as a hook-nosed, evil-looking Jew, the state of Israel was characterized as a "Pharaoh," and Israeli

* Typical is the initiative at Princeton; see www.princetondivest.org/faculty.htm.

† In a December 2001 lecture delivered in Beirut, Lebanon, Finkelstein likened Israeli actions to "Nazi practices" during World War II, albeit with some added "novelties to the Nazi experiments."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

soldiers were likened to Nazis blindly "following orders" in "a brutal occupation" that "violates international law, human rights, and the basic ethical standards of humanity."

IN THE decades before World War II, a mass of anti-Semitic rhetoric, from *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* through *Mein Kampf* and beyond, helped prepare the intellectual and cultural groundwork for the catastrophe that followed. Today, the ceaseless denunciations of Israel on the part of the international Left, including some of its most respected and respectable spokesmen, cannot help striking one as possessing the seeds of a macabre replay. What George F. Will has called the "centrality of anti-Semitism" to the current Middle East crisis may yet develop the potential of transforming that crisis into (to quote Will again) "the second—and final?—phase of the struggle for a 'final solution' to the Jewish question."

European leaders would heatedly abjure any such objective; yet in their hands, the anti-Israel and anti-Jewish campaign has generated real momentum. The European states are militarily weak, but they have other levers of power to exercise. They have already played a major role in Israel's political and diplomatic isolation, and they could conceivably attempt to strangle it economically by means of the boycotts and sanctions they have threatened to impose. By virtue of their influence in international organizations, and through the moral cachet they continue, however unaccountably, to deploy in centers of elite opinion elsewhere around the world, they have been instrumental in chipping away at Israel's very legitimacy.

One does not wish to exaggerate. Today's virulent anti-Semitism is, in part, an epiphenomenon of the Israel-Arab conflict—or, more accurately, of Israel's effort to withstand the Arab determination to destroy it. To the degree that Israel succeeds in thwarting or turning aside that determination, the rhetoric may abate, and explicit anti-Semitism may diminish. (By contrast, the perception of Jewish weakness has historically always fed the appetite of anti-Jewish aggression.) But there is also no denying that the new anti-Semitism has taken on a life of its own, gathering strength from long-repressed theological hatreds suddenly given license to emerge, from all sorts of misplaced social resentments that have nothing to do with the Jews, and (to judge from the Left-Arab coalition) from broader ideological agendas in which Israel is a mere stand-in, a conveniently vulnerable target for those not yet willing or able to take on the mighty United States.

One small but very disturbing sign of the headway being made by the new anti-Semitism is the speculation that has suddenly sprung up in the most disparate places about the possibility of a world without Israel—as if it were a perfectly ordinary prospect for a thriving democracy of nearly five million Jews simply to disappear. That a leader of Hamas like Ismail Abu Shanab should contemplate the extinction of Israel is understandable; that he should feel comfortable in talking about it publicly—"There are," he has amiably explained, "a lot of open areas in the United States that could absorb the Jews"—tells us a good deal about what has come to be considered permissible discourse in the presence of reporters. But then, Tom Paulin and A.N. Wilson have followed close behind—and similar sorts of thoughts, suitably qualified, have even appeared under the bylines of avowed friends of the Jewish state here at home. As one of them, Richard John Neuhaus, has lately written, while personally disclaiming any such sentiment, even to "wish that Israel 'would cease to exist' is. . . not necessarily a wish to destroy the Jews, since one might at the same time hope that the minority of the world's Jews living in Israel would find a secure home elsewhere, notably in the U.S." Such are the tortuous rationalizations to which the swell of worldwide anti-Semitism has led.

Great shocks, as we know from the last century, can produce political flux beyond all foresight. In the last years the world has been subjected to a series of such shocks, September 11 being the greatest, and more may well be on the way. Where their repercussions will end no one can yet say, but the concomitant and hardly accidental revival of the ancient fear and hatred known as anti-Semitism must make one tremble. The story of 20th-century Europe, wrote the historian Norman Cohn in the concluding words of *Warrant for Genocide*, his 1966 study of European anti-Semitism in the years before World War II, is a story of how

> a grossly delusional view of the world, based on infantile fears and hatreds, was able to find expression in murder and torture beyond all imagining. It is a case-history in collective psychopathology, and its deepest implications reach far beyond anti-Semitism and the fate of the Jews.

Those words remain frighteningly relevant today.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why the Settlements Should Stay

Hillel Halkin

THE SETTLEMENTS! If only they didn't exist! If only Israel understood the folly of them! They have been a ruinous drain on its resources, a flagrant violation of international law, a systematic effort to dispossess the Palestinians, an intolerable presence on Palestinian soil, and, in short, "the greatest Israeli obstacle to peace," as the *New York Times* recently put it in hardly its first editorial on the subject. For the sake of peace, they will have to be uprooted.

Such, today, is the conventional wisdom even among most of Israel's friends, even among many Israelis. Like all wisdom of its kind, it is self-perpetuating. And like all wisdom of its kind, it needs a second look.

Such a look might begin with the word "settlement" itself, which implies a small and easily removable community. Most people, when they imagine the Palestinian West Bank, in which are to be found close to three-quarters of the roughly 175 Jewish settlements built on territory occupied by Israel in 1967, and 90 percent of their total population of 250,000, see a series of isolated outposts surrounded by hostile Arab towns and villages.[1] Such outposts, numbering several hundred inhabitants or fewer, do exist, from the Hebron hills in the southern West Bank, traditionally known to Jews and Christians as Judea, to the fringes of Jenin in the northern West Bank or Samaria.[2] Most of them, however, are surrounded by empty space rather than by Arab towns and villages.

But other settlements, as the *Times* noted in the same editorial, are the size of large towns, and some are approaching small cities. Ma'aleh Adumim, in the Judean desert east of Jerusalem, has a population of 28,000; Ariel, in the foothills east of Tel Aviv, 18,000; Betar Illit, an ultra-Orthodox community south of Jerusalem, has passed 15,000. Standing in the center of such places, one has a view not of hostile Palestinians but of Jewish houses, streets, parks, shops, and businesses as far as the eye can see.

If the settlements were a bad idea, they were indeed a great waste of public funds. Huge amounts have been invested in them by Israeli governments

HILLEL HALKIN, *a regular contributor, is the author most recently of* Across the Sabbath River: In Search of a Lost Tribe of Israel, *forthcoming in August from Houghton Mifflin.*

[1] The figure of 250,000 does not include the roughly 200,000 Jewish residents of East Jerusalem, considered by the Palestinians to be "settlers" too. It does include some 25,000 Jews who live today in the Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip. The political, geographical, and demographic problematics of these three areas, however, are vastly different from those of the West Bank; for the most part, this article deals only with the latter.

[2] Contrary to a widely disseminated misconception, "Judea" and "Samaria"—Yehudah and Shomron in Hebrew—are not archaic biblical terms revived by Israel after 1967 to justify a Jewish presence in the hill country south and north of Jerusalem. They are the geographical names for these areas that have always been used by Jews and that, until replaced by "West Bank" after the Jordanian annexation of 1951, were standard in the Christian world as well.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for construction and infrastructure, only a part of which has been recovered through the sale of housing, real-estate and commercial taxes, and other revenue. And yet, apart from this construction having been an important source of income to those engaged in it, especially to many thousands of Palestinian workers, evacuating the settlements today would be far more expensive than building them.

Assuming, for instance, 7,000 dwelling units in Ma'aleh Adumim, a suburb populated largely by young families coming from and working in Jerusalem, and modestly estimating the price of equivalent housing in Jerusalem at $250,000 per family unit, the cost of relocating Ma'aleh Adumim's residents, and of paying compensation to its shop-owners and businesses, would come to over $2 billion. The total cost of evacuating all the settlements could easily—talk of ruinous!—exceed $20 billion.

We are assured that Israel will not have to pay for this. The international community, it is said, will be glad to finance peace by footing the bill and resettling Palestinian refugees in the evacuated homes, thus helping to solve two problems at once. This, however, remains to be seen. Meanwhile, $20 billion is not in evidence. Nor is there likely to be much enthusiasm for writing a check in that amount on the part of taxpayers in America, Europe, and Japan, who have been hearing for the past 35 years that the settlements are illegal. Why pay the price of Israel's crimes?

THAT THE settlements *are* illegal, the conventional wisdom says, is obvious. But it is far from obvious—even if, like many a commonplace, it has been remarked upon so often that it has attained the status of a universally acknowledged truth.

The case for the illegality of the Jewish settlements in the West Bank rests largely on a single source: article 49(6) in the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. This article states that an occupying military power "shall not deport or transfer part of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies." Yet, as a number of international jurists have pointed out, not only has Israel "deported" or "transferred" no one to the settlements, whose inhabitants are there of their own free will, it is by no means clear that Israel was ever, legally, in the position of being an occupying power.

This is because, in 1967, Israel had as good a claim as anyone to the West Bank, which in effect belonged to no government. The Jordanian annexation of the area, while acquiesced in by the same Palestinian leadership that had rejected the 1947 UN partition resolution, was unrecognized by most of the world, and Jordan itself had refused to make peace with Israel or to consider their joint border more than a temporary cease-fire line. A reasonable case could thus be made that, as the sole sovereign state to have emerged from British-mandated Palestine, Israel had not only the right but the duty to act as the West Bank's civil administrator pending determination of the area's status.

The conventional wisdom is also wrong in asserting—a frequently made claim—that continued settlement activity on the part of Israel is a violation of the 1993 Oslo accords. The plain fact of the matter is that nowhere in that agreement was there any reference to the settlements, apart from a single paragraph stating that—along with Jerusalem, refugees, and "other issues of common interest"—their fate was to be settled in final-status negotiations. This was hardly an oversight. The Palestinians wanted a settlement freeze and fought for one at Oslo; if they did not get it, this is only because in the end they accepted the Israeli refusal to agree to one. In repeatedly demanding one anyway over the ensuing years, it is they, not the Israelis, who have gone back on the document they signed.

And yet whatever the legality of the settlements, the debate over it is incapable of adjudication, since international law, especially with regard to disputes between countries, remains in large measure a fiction lacking courts to interpret it impartially. Nor, it must be admitted, did questions of legality especially exercise Israel when it established the settlements in the first place. It is therefore worth recalling why, when, and where it did establish them.

Even though settling Jews on available land was a Zionist reflex, if not the supreme imperative of Jewish policy in the historic land of Israel from the late 19th century on, the immediate reaction of the Labor-party government of Prime Minister Levi Eshkol to Israel's stunning victory in the Six-Day war of June 1967 was to *bar* Jewish settlement in the West Bank. Caught by surprise both by the war and by the extent of the Arab defeat, the Eshkol government adopted this position in the expectation that peace talks with Jordan would soon commence and lead to the return of most of the area to King Hussein.

Apart from annexing East Jerusalem, Israel undertook no settlement activity at all in the first months after the fighting, during which the government countenanced, at most, several privately initiated ventures on the Golan Heights and in the Etsion Bloc southwest of Jerusalem—where, in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1948, a cluster of kibbutzim had been destroyed by the Arab Legion after fierce resistance. (Both areas had great emotional resonance for the Israeli public, the Golan because of long years of Syrian shelling from it, the "Bloc" as a symbol of Jewish heroism and loss in the War of Independence.) Similarly, when, in April 1968, ten months after the Six-Day war, a group of religious Jews moved into and refused to leave a hotel in the Judean city of Hebron, in which an ancient Jewish community had existed until driven out by a pogrom in 1929, no action was taken to evict them.

But by the spring of 1968, Israel's situation had changed. The "three no's"—to peace with Israel, to recognition of Israel, and to negotiations with Israel—of the pan-Arab conference in Khartoum that ended in September 1967, plus the passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 in November, deliberately phrased to call for Israeli withdrawal to "secure and recognized borders" from "occupied" rather than from "*the* occupied" territories, had convinced Israel of two things: that peace talks were not imminent, and that, were they to become so, the world would agree to Israeli retention of a minimum of territory needed for its security. The result was the "Allon Plan," named for Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon. Israel's first formulation of a coherent West Bank strategy, it called for Jewish settlements surrounding Jerusalem, in the foothills of Samaria just east of the 1967 border, and in the sparsely inhabited Jordan Valley—and nowhere else. Eighty percent of the West Bank, including its most heavily populated regions, would remain out of bounds to Jews.

The Allon Plan, though it came under heavy domestic criticism as a British-Mandate-style "White Paper" banning Jews from living in their own homeland, determined settlement policy until 1974. Then, shortly after the Yom Kippur war, which ended with a battered and disillusioned Israel seemingly further away from peace than ever, a first wedge was driven in it. Demanding that the government of Yitzhak Rabin recognize the right of Jews to settle anywhere in Judea and Samaria, a militant group named Gush Emunim staged a "live-in" at Sebastia, the site of the biblical city of Shomron. The Rabin government, though at first inclined to evict the squatters, was persuaded by Defense Minister Shimon Peres to negotiate with them, leading to the founding of the settlement of Kedumim in the heart of Samaria. Subsequently, the Allon Plan's restrictions on Jewish settlement began to crumble.

Nevertheless, at the time of the momentous defeat of Labor in the elections of 1977 by Menachem Begin's Likud party, there were barely ten thousand Jews living in the West Bank. Soon after these elections, Egypt's president Anwar Sadat came to Jerusalem on his peace overture. Had there been at this time the slightest willingness on the part of Jordanians or Palestinians to join the Egyptian-Israeli peace talks, these few settlers would have been an obstacle to nothing. (Their number was indeed only slightly greater than the number of Israelis in the Sinai that would be evacuated by the Begin government in 1981.) But the Jordanians stood aloof from the proposal for West Bank autonomy made by Begin to Sadat; the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) assailed it; and more and more settlers, encouraged by Likud policy, began moving into the West Bank.

WERE THEY an obstacle to peace with the Palestinians? The historical record shows that, at least up to the Oslo Agreement of 1993, they were the opposite: not an obstacle but an impetus to peace.

This can be confirmed, first of all, empirically. From 1977 on, as West Bank settlement grew by leaps and bounds, passing the 100,000 mark in 1990, Arab and Palestinian attitudes toward Israel became steadily more flexible. The year 1979 marked the signing of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty. In 1985 the PLO, which had hitherto called for the destruction of Israel and the establishment of a "secular, democratic" (i.e., non-Jewish) state in all of Palestine, suggested forming a joint delegation with Jordan to negotiate the return of the West Bank and Gaza Strip alone; in 1988, it announced its acceptance of Resolution 242 and its willingness to recognize Israel; in 1992, it went to Oslo with the Rabin government.

Of course, there were other reasons for this, too. They included the peace between Israel and Egypt; the defeat of the PLO in Lebanon in 1982; the PLO's financial and political debacle in the Gulf war; the waning of the first *intifada*, which broke out in 1987 and had begun to subside by the early 1990's; and the growing popularity in the occupied territories of Islamic groups challenging PLO supremacy. But of all these factors, it may be that nothing convinced the PLO that time was against it so much as the growth of the settlements. As long as the number of people in them was negligible, they did not seem likely to prevent Israel from ever surrendering control of the West Bank. Now that they were expanding by 10,000 inhabitants a year, the PLO feared the approach of a point of no

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

return. This fear was, in the 1980's and early 90's, a factor working for, not against, peace.

One might consider a counter-factual proposition. Suppose that every Israeli government, from 1967 until the present, had done what the conventional wisdom says it should have done. Suppose it had declared, "Not a single Jew will be allowed to live in the West Bank until there is peace, and we intend to hold the area in escrow for the Palestinians for as long as this takes. Let it be ten years. Let it be twenty. Let it be 50 or 100. The Arab world can rest assured that, whenever it is tired of fighting, it will get this territory back as we received it, free of Jews."

Would *this* have hastened peace talks or moderated the PLO? Why should it have? Common sense dictates that the Palestinian and Arab reaction would have been, "Well, then, there's no need to hurry. We have all the time in the world. First, let us go on trying to destroy Israel. If we succeed, so much the better. If we fail, we will have lost nothing."

In point of fact, however, Israel could never have kept such a promise even had it made it. As the months after the June 1967 victory lengthened into years, no Israeli government would have lasted if it told its people: "No matter how long the Arabs refuse to make peace with us, you are forever barred from living in any part of the land of Israel beyond the 1967 borders that the Arabs refuse to recognize." The Allon Plan was initially acceptable to most Israelis because, while pragmatic, it did not in principle deny the right of Jews to live beyond those borders. A policy of declaring the West Bank entirely *Judenrein* would have toppled Labor and brought the Likud to power well before 1977.

THERE IS indeed something unacceptable about telling Jews that although they may live anywhere they wish, in New York and London, in Moscow and Buenos Aires, there is one part of the world they may not live in—namely, Judea and Samaria, those regions of the land of Israel most intimately connected with the Bible, with the Second Temple period, and with Jewish historical memory, and most longed-for by the Jewish people over the ages.

It is a matter of historical irony that, when Israel's 1948 War of Independence ended, it found the Jews heavily concentrated in the narrow lowland of Palestine's coastal strip, where the biblical Philistines once lived, and the Arabs mainly in the hill country of the interior, where the ancient Jews once lived. Yet this is also a matter of historical consistency. All over the world, and throughout time, more technologically advanced peoples have ended up occupying the plains and valleys, where a high degree of agricultural, political, and military organization is most effective, leaving the hills to their less advanced rivals. In biblical times, the hill people of Palestine were the Israelites. In 1948, they were the Palestinians.

Be that as it may, Jordan, Israel's main military adversary in 1948, saw to it that the West Bank it annexed had not a Jew in it. It was thus inevitable, following the 1967 victory, that there should have been widespread sentiment in Israel for opening Judea and Samaria to Jewish settlement. The ensuing debate had not two sides but three, which might be labeled the "pros," the "cons," and the "halfways." In simplified form, combining arguments that received different degrees of prominence at different times and in different circumstances, the debate went like this:

Pros: "Jews have an absolute right to live anywhere in their historic homeland. For a Jewish government to deny this right would be monstrous."

Cons: "There is a difference between a right and its implementation. In theory, the Palestinian refugees also have the right to return to the homes they fled in 1948, but in practice there are good grounds for opposing this. The same can be said of Jews and the West Bank. Jewish settlements there will take away more land from a Palestinian people that already lost most of its territory in 1948. They will create resentment and anger among this people and inflame anti-Israel feeling. And they will make it impossible to exchange the West Bank for peace, thus precluding a political solution. Israel can exist without Judea and Samaria. For the Palestinians, this is all they have left. Keeping it for them is both the prudent and the moral thing to do."

Pros: "Israel can *not* exist without Jews in Judea and Samaria. This is so physically, because a return to the 1967 borders, which at their narrowest left the country six miles wide between the West Bank and the sea, will render it militarily indefensible. And it is so psychologically, because, while you can divide the land of Israel on a map, you cannot divide it as a concept. Either it belongs to the Jewish people or it does not. The Arabs say it does not. If Jews concede today that they have no place in Judea and Samaria, they will concede tomorrow that they have none in Haifa and Tel Aviv."

Cons: "That is absurd. Jews *are* in Haifa and Tel Aviv. They need no historical justification for being there. And there are other ways of making Israel

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

defensible. A Palestinian state can be demilitarized. Modern technology permits early-warning systems and military responses that make distances on the ground irrelevant."

Pros: "Demilitarization will be a farce if Israel does not control the Palestinian border with the Arab world in the Jordan Valley. So will any early-warning system. Arab tanks could enter a Palestinian state through that valley and cut Israel in half literally overnight."

Halfways: "That is why there is a need to compromise on something like the Allon Plan. It is the optimal solution."

Cons: "It is no solution at all. Neither the Palestinians nor any Arab country will accept the Allon Plan, or anything less than a full withdrawal to the 1967 lines. No settlements at all—that is the only game in town."

Pros: "You've just given the best reason for settlements everywhere. Why forbid Jews to live in their own land if a defensible Israel will not result from a full withdrawal in any case?"

Halfways: "You're forgetting demography. There are two million Arabs living in the West Bank. Adding them to the population of Israel would be the end of Israel as a Jewish state."

Pros: "You don't have to add them. They can be citizens of Jordan or of Palestine."

Cons: "You mean Arab Bantus in an Israeli Bantustan."

Pros: "We mean Israelis and Palestinians living together. If they can do so on the old Israeli side of the 1967 border, why can't they do so on the old Jordanian side?"

Cons: "There is no analogy. The Palestinians in Israel were there before the Jews. The Israelis on the West Bank are intruders. They have robbed the West Bankers of their property. They constitute an insufferable provocation. 'They deprive the Palestinians'—permit me to quote from a *New York Times* editorial—'of prime land and water, break up Palestinian geographic continuity, are hard to defend against Palestinian attack, and complicate the establishment of a clear, secure Israeli border.' How can you argue with that?"

PERHAPS BY beginning with the Palestinians' own statistics.

Jewish settlers in the West Bank number, as I have said, some 225,000 people—or about a tenth of the area's total population. (By comparison, the one million Palestinians now living in Israel form close to a fifth of *its* population.) According to Palestinian figures, the built-up area currently occupied by the settlements constitutes 2 percent of the West Bank.[3] Another 2.2 percent has been set apart by the Israeli government for future expansion, and an additional 1.5 percent has been used for 190 miles of roads leading to, or connecting, the settlements. All in all, the Jewish tenth of the West Bank's population lives on one-fiftieth of its area, has title to another fiftieth, and travels on a special sixty-fifth.

Whatever the percentages, the Palestinians claim that all land used by the settlements has been stolen from them and must be relinquished. Israel, for its part, contends that this land has been acquired legally. Both sides agree that its transfer to Jewish ownership has been conducted by three basic mechanisms.

One has been direct sales by Palestinian owners to Israeli buyers. (Many of these, the Palestinians say, were fraudulent or performed under duress.) A second has been the allotment, by Israel to the settlers, of unowned or former Jordanian state-owned land. (The Palestinians insist that Israel had no proprietary rights to either.) A third has been the confiscation of private Palestinian land for "public purposes." (Which, the Palestinians contend, has consistently meant only Jewish purposes.) Although neither Palestinian nor Israeli sources offer a breakdown by category, the last-named—confiscations—probably comprises the smallest of the three.

The Palestinians also point out that the settlements occupy far more land per capita than do Palestinian towns and cities, whose built-up area, for a population ten times greater, is less than twice as large—a disparity in population density that is due partly to larger Palestinian families' living in more crowded quarters and partly to the settlements' having more extensive private and public spaces. Still, the 5.7 percent of the West Bank apportioned to settlement activity now and in the future, while not insignificant, hardly constitutes a major takeover of what the *Times* calls "prime Palestinian land."[4]

The same holds true for water. Although many Palestinian localities do suffer acute water shortages during the dry summer months, the settlements, despite their far greater per-capita domestic consumption of water, are not directly to blame. Unlike the Palestinians, the settlers are for the

[3] These statistics were supplied by Jad Ishak, director of the Palestinian-run Applied Research Institute in Jerusalem. Mr. Ishak has served as an adviser on the settlements to the Palestinian Authority.

[4] One reason it does not is that, outside the Jordan Valley, all of the West Bank settlements are compact bedroom communities that neither engage in agriculture nor are rurally zoned.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

most part linked to the central Israeli water grid and do not pump their water from local wells, and Israeli restrictions on Palestinian pumping, however onerous, have been aimed at protecting Israeli aquifers in general rather than at diverting water specifically to the settlements. If the Jewish inhabitants of the settlements were all moved to the coastal plain tomorrow, they would be drawing the same amount of water from these aquifers as today.

On the other hand, the settlements do, as the *Times* says, "break up Palestinian geographic continuity," since no part of the West Bank is without them. The *Times* is right, too, that many of them, because small and reached by vulnerable roads, "are hard to defend against Palestinian attack." It has been the need to protect them against such attack that has led to the proliferation of Israeli army patrols and military checkpoints that Palestinian drivers and their passengers, often held up several times in the course of short journeys, have found particularly harassing and humiliating. Certainly, a permanent situation in which this continued would be incompatible with Palestinian sovereignty in any meaningful sense. No Palestinian state could allow the Israeli army to be everywhere in its territory (as opposed to in limited bases in the Jordan Valley).

The *Times* is also right that the settlements, in their present locations, "complicate the establishment of a clear, secure Israeli border." In fact, if such a border had to include all the settlements within it, it would be impossible to draw. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's current "interim agreement" proposal, which calls for keeping all the settlements under Israeli control while giving only 40 percent of the West Bank to the Palestinians, illustrates the dilemma: the border would have to take in large amounts of land not belonging to the settlements in order to encompass them all. The noncontiguous cantons thereby left to the Palestinians would indeed be the equivalent of Bantustans, and there is no conceivable reason why the Palestinians should accept them.

To sum up: the great majority of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank are not there because of Israel's original post-1967 policy and would not have been built at all had the Arabs been prepared to negotiate a peace treaty in the aftermath of the 1967 war. They are not necessarily illegal, and they have probably, over the years, furthered peace more than they have hindered it. Relocating their inhabitants would cost enormous sums. Moreover, they express a deep Jewish imperative that cannot be challenged without calling into question the Jewish historical attachment to Palestine that validates the state of Israel. And although many of them are built on land taken from the Palestinians against their will, their physical dimension is not intolerable from a Palestinian point of view.

What is intolerable is both the discriminatory asymmetry behind the settlements—that is, the assumption that, whereas Jews have a right to live in all of the historic land of Israel, Palestinian refugees do not have a right to live in all of historic Palestine—and the practical consequences of Palestinian hostility to them. If not for such hostility, no Israeli army would be needed to defend them, and if no Israeli army were needed to defend them, they could exist in a Palestinian state.

OVER A year-and-a-half into the cruelest fighting that the Jewish-Arab conflict in Palestine has known, and in which the settlers have been a main target of Palestinian violence, the notion that they could live in a Palestinian state may seem laughably quixotic.

This may be what it is. But if it is, so is the notion of a genuine Israeli-Palestinian peace (as opposed to either a permanently ongoing conflict or a tense state of nonbelligerency with closed borders and no economic or other relationships). Is it possible, after all, to imagine a Palestine and Israel with friendly relations and open borders, tourism and trade, Palestinian workers coming every day to earn their livelihood in Israel, Israeli and Palestinian products being exchanged back and forth, and over a million Palestinian citizens of Israel regularly hosting and visiting friends and families in a Palestinian West Bank in which no Jews are allowed to live?

It has been suggested that, although Jews might indeed live in a Palestinian state some day, the currently inflamed emotions on both sides, and the extreme anti-settler sentiments of the Palestinians, make speaking of this at the present moment an instance of placing the cart before the horse. First, the two peoples must be separated, with Israelis on one side of a recognized border and Palestinians on the other. Then, as the old passions subside and the wounds of enmity are healed, they can begin to mix again.

Good fences, in other words, will make good neighbors. And yet the idea that the best way of enabling Jews to live in Judea and Samaria is to begin by removing 225,000 of them from there is not only curiously Rube-Goldbergish, it will not even lead to the desired separation, since there will still be over a million Palestinians, most of them identified with the Palestinian state, living in Israel. If the purpose of evacuating Jewish settlers to the Israeli side of the border is an amicable divorce, this

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

should logically be accompanied by moving Israel's Arabs to the Palestinian side. Those who attack the asymmetrical injustice of granting Jewish settlers a historical right denied to Palestinian refugees overlook the similar injustice of relocating the settlers alone.

Perfect symmetry between Israelis and Palestinians is no longer attainable. It was proposed in 1947 by the United Nations, which voted to divide Mandate Palestine in half, and rejected then by the Arabs. But without some symmetry, an Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation is unattainable, too. One element in achieving it might therefore be to let the 225,000 settlers remain in a Palestinian state while allowing a similar number of Palestinian refugees to return to Israel and fairly compensating all those who cannot. (This might also be a far better use of $20 billion.) To prevent the returnees from adversely affecting Israel's demographic balance, it would then be necessary to create another symmetry: just as the Jewish settlers and their offspring in a Palestinian state could live there as permanent residents while remaining Israeli citizens and voting in Israeli elections, so returning Palestinian refugees resettled in Israel would remain citizens of Palestine.

Is it conceivable that, after the events of the last year-and-a-half, Jewish settlers would be prepared to risk their lives in a Palestinian state? That would depend on many things, most of all on whether this state could guarantee their safety and enable them to live normally. As a collective body, the settlers have, over the years, exhibited a remarkable courage and attachment to their homes, which suggests that many of them would be prepared to try braving such an arrangement.

Amid the nasty demonization of the settlers that has taken place in the world media, the astounding fact has gone largely unnoticed that their population in the West Bank, even over the past eighteen months, during which they have been shot at daily on the roads and lived in perpetual insecurity, has grown faster than the population of Israel in general, increasing in 2001 by 5 percent. Although, needless to say, they would prefer the protection of the Israeli army to the protection of the Palestinian police, they will not necessarily cut and run if, as part of a larger resolution, the army pulls out.

A bigger question is the Palestinians themselves. While there will always be militants among them who will want the settlers out under any circumstances (and the Jews out of Tel Aviv and Haifa), these may be controllable if a clear majority of Palestinians desire—as they do not today—to let the settlers live in peace. To do so, they would have to be convinced that this is fair and beneficial to themselves.

Fairness is a matter of the right symmetries. But the benefits of open borders, with Jews and Arabs living on both sides of them, would be much greater for Palestinians than for Israelis. Israel can prosper without Palestine. A Palestinian state without Israel to employ its labor force and buy its agricultural products will continue to be an economic basket case. And a Palestinian state separated from a Jewish state by a wall, literal or figurative, will mean a Palestinian people walled off from itself.

Ultimately, though, the benefit would be great for both sides. It would enable each to live in its own state and under its own government while together inhabiting one country that is an indivisible geographical and historical unit and inalienable to the memories of both. What matters most to Jews is not that they rule over an undivided land of Israel, but that they be allowed to be freely at home in it. What matters most to Arabs in Palestine, one trusts, is the same thing.

Of course, this may be a utopian fantasy. Whether or not to explore it represents a crossroads that Palestinian and Israeli negotiators will have to come to. It is noteworthy that, thus far, official Israeli and Palestinian positions have simply ignored the possibility of Jewish settlers living under Palestinian sovereignty, which may be taken either as an indication that neither side rules it out or as an indication that neither side thinks it remotely feasible.

It would also, if it came to that, represent a crossroads for the Israeli public. Since the inception of the Zionist project, two alternative models have competed for adoption, often confusingly and without a sufficiently clear sense of their mutual contradictoriness: that of Jewish-Arab separation and that of Jewish-Arab integration. It may well be the case—as it has given every sign of being so far—that the latter idea consists of too much romance and too little realism. What needs to be asked is whether it could be given one last, comprehensive chance.

One thing should be clear. A West Bank without Jews means a Palestine and Israel without a normal relationship. If *this* is what it comes to, Israel will have to ask many or most of the settlers to pack their bags and will then withdraw to a defensive line of its own choosing, which will not be that of 1967 and will not meet Palestinian demands. After that, the fences will go up. They will not make good neighbors.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Socialism's Nine Lives

Midge Decter

TO ANYONE in 21st-century America who has never succumbed to the temptation, buying into socialism must seem at best an exotic and at worst a deeply perverse thing to do. For socialism—that system under which all or most of the means of production and distribution are owned by the state in order that it may impose ever greater economic equality—painfully violates everything the world has learned about the behavior of human beings and the behavior of economies, taking the starch out of the former and killing off the energy of the latter. That is true even when socialism has been benignly intended (as in the case of Israeli kibbutzim or the Labor government of postwar Britain). When *not* benignly intended—that is, especially in serving as the justification for the policies of Lenin, Stalin, and their disciples—socialism has set world records for cruelty, oppression, and plain murder.

Startlingly, however, an appendix to Joshua Muravchik's new book, *Heaven on Earth: The Rise and Fall of Socialism*,* instructs us that as late as 1985, eighteen countries were still suffering under Communism proper, 41 others languished under a system that he dubs "third-world socialism" but that is not all that easily distinguishable from its Soviet original, and another eleven were being governed by the milder variant known as social democracy. Thus socialism, despite all the misery and penury and oppression endured in its name, continued over the course of nearly two centuries to fail upward.

How this strange and nearly unrelievedly grim development came about is Muravchik's theme. He tells his story, in fascinating detail, primarily through a series of portraits of socialist thinkers and/or political leaders, from François-Noel Babeuf in the early years after the French Revolution to Tony Blair of today's Britain. You might thus say that the book sets out to de-Marxianize the historical development of socialism: that is, to provide an account of it not as some overarching rational "process" but rather as the work of this or that particular man's mind and character and circumstances. And because Muravchik has elected to tell the story in its human dimension, his book, once opened, is very hard to put down.

To be sure, much that is in *Heaven on Earth* is by now familiar. We have long known, for instance, that with only rare exceptions, socialist thinkers and leaders were themselves raised in homes that were at least financially comfortable and sometimes plain rich. As a consequence, most of them

MIDGE DECTER, *who founded and led the Committee for the Free World, is the author of* The Liberated Woman and Other Americans; Liberal Parents, Radical Children; *and, most recently,* An Old Wife's Tale: My Seven Decades in Love and War *(Regan Books).*

* Encounter, 344 pp., $27.95. The epilogue, about the evolution of an Israeli kibbutz away from its absolutist egalitarian ideology, formed the basis of an article by Muravchik, "Socialism's Last Stand," in the March 2002 COMMENTARY.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had little or no natural contact, or indeed any particular sympathy, with the workers who were the ostensible objects of their wisdom and beneficence.

We have also long known that Karl Marx was an inveterate cadger, who considered his work too earth-shakingly significant to bind him to mere earthly responsibilities; instead, he and his wife and children depended almost completely on the largesse of his wealthy friend and collaborator Friedrich Engels, who for years continued to keep them in the far from meager style to which they felt themselves entitled. (As Muravchik also reminds us, Engels was the ghost author of most of Marx's writings that are even minimally felicitous.)

Similarly well known are the details of how V.I. Lenin managed, by sheer steely nerve, to hijack the revolution against the Czar that had been made by others, thereby offering a hint of what he would do in far bloodier fashion to the Russian people at large. Then there is the British philanthropist and utopian Robert Owen, who merits a chapter of his own in *Heaven on Earth*; even a reader unacquainted with the minutiae of Owen's biography can readily recognize the blend of unpleasant psychic hungers that led to the creation of his short-lived and disastrous community in Indiana called, laughably, New Harmony.

So it is not by virtue of new discoveries that this book grips the reader. Rather, Muravchik's distinctive voice—mixing a compelling liveliness with a certain quiet dispassion—makes the book's material feel somehow freshly perceived. And one is also simply carried along by the authoritative ease with which Muravchik moves from the late 18th century through Marx & Co., Lenin & Co., Nazism and fascism, Clement Attlee and postwar British social democracy, Julius Nyerere and African socialism, Samuel Gompers and American trade unionism, Gorbachev, Deng, and the modernization of Communism—all made vivid in a mere 320 pages.

GIVEN THIS tone of lively familiarity, it should come as no surprise that the author of *Heaven on Earth* was himself once a socialist, indeed a youthful member of the Socialist Party USA and later, after one of the inveterate splits for which leftist groups are notable, a stalwart of the faction (or "fraction") known as Social Democrats USA. But Muravchik's personal relation to his story goes back still farther. In the book's prologue, he announces: "Socialism is the faith in which I was raised." His grandparents had been members of the radical wing of the Russian Social Revolutionary party before emigrating to America, and his father declared himself a socialist in 1929, at the age of thirteen, under the influence of Norman Thomas's campaign for the mayoralty of New York.

Now, partly because of the unique political history and culture of the United States, and partly because of Samuel Gompers and his American Federation of Labor (AFL), even during the Great Depression socialist thinking gained no significant foothold in this country, not even, or perhaps especially not, among American workers. Its appeal was largely limited to small groups of intellectuals who in turn were split into various sub-groups, adherents of the ideas of this or that thinker. The exceptions were the Stalinists, socialism's ugliest progeny, whose cultural influence would sweep like a warm breeze through the ranks of the glamorous, the fashionable, and the well-born, continuing to infect many even through the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939, the Hungarian revolution of 1956, all the way through Castro and Ho Chi Minh.*

In the 1880's and 1890's, Gompers had been instrumental in organizing the AFL, and until his death in 1924 he remained its major political and intellectual influence. He was a passionate opponent of the socialists. If their object was to create an entirely new kind of society, his, and by extension his union's, was to better the lot of workers as and where they were. Gompers was, for example, opposed to the minimum wage, on the ground that it would have the effect of rendering unskilled laborers unemployable. In short, his was a project to which true-believing socialists, their eyes on revolution, were either indifferent or downright hostile. Their idea was that the worse things became for the working class, the better—or, as this idea later and all too fatefully came to be expressed by the German Communists who acquiesced in the coming to power of the Nazis in 1933, *nach Hitler uns* ("After Hitler, us").

When Lenin began to exercise his ill-gained power in the Soviet Union, Gompers became a fervent, outspoken, and uncompromising anti-Communist. In time, his shoes would be filled by a New York City-born plumber named George Meany, who became president of the combined American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations in 1955 and in 1972 led the AFL-CIO to take a neutral stance in the presidential election pitting George McGovern against Richard Nixon. By then, Muravchik's Social Democrats,

* The best analysis of Stalinism as a cultural force in the United States remains Robert Warshow's in *The Immediate Experience* (1962). See my "Remembering Robert Warshow" in the April 2002 COMMENTARY.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

whether they admitted it to themselves or not, had largely deserted the ranks of socialism proper, their youthful radical faith having been replaced by the hope of political effectiveness and themselves having become disciples of Gompers by way of Meany. Later, their hearts if anything belonged more completely to Meany's successor, Lane Kirkland, who throughout the latter part of the cold war displayed a faithfulness to America's needs that was not widely on offer elsewhere.

AMERICA IN the 1970's was in a parlous condition, culturally speaking. The so-called "kids" were still on a righteous rampage, when not in a drugged stupor; women had begun to storm the ramparts; black-nationalist leaders were discovering that anti-Semitism was their wave of the future; public education had hit rock bottom; and the media were going haywire from an unprecedented attack of mindlessness combined with an unprecedented accession of power. In the meantime, the ideological conservatives, who by decade's end would be preparing to take political power, were with only a few exceptions still sulking in their cultural tents.

For someone like me, who hated Communism and was both fearful and angry about what was happening in and to the United States, Joshua Muravchik and his small but hardy band of Social Democrats provided a haven of fellowship in those years.* One evening, during a wedding celebration for two young members of the group, I leaned across the table toward a newfound friend, probably no more sober than I, grabbed a mimeographed party membership form, and signed on. Several days later, I received my first official piece of mail—and my first taste of socialist politics. Its salutation read: "Dear Fraction Member."

As it turned out, the haven did not provide shelter for long, either for me, essentially an outsider, or even for a fair number of my new "comrades." I would not presume to speak to what was moving them. Perhaps it was the fact that engaging all of their political and intellectual energies in a battle with their putative fellow-leftists inevitably affected their relation to the entire Left enterprise. Perhaps it was that, despite the AFL-CIO leadership's unfailing embrace of them, in the end the unions had their own domestic fish to fry, and these were not always palatable to those whose true passion concerned America's role in the world. (Ultimately, the labor movement itself would be captured by those who wanted to push it to the Left, and who would send George Meany and Lane Kirkland spinning in their graves.) Or perhaps a number of the Social Democrats were, like me, moving closer to a not merely pragmatic but also theoretical appreciation of capitalism.

But for a while yet my fellow Social Democrats were not prepared to give up their loyalty to unionism, and I too was not yet ready to drop my nostalgic attachment to certain old scraps of liberal sentiment, so many pressed roses in a long-unread book. In hindsight, I can see that I was biding my time, caught in a kind of meanwhile until the presidential candidacy of Ronald Reagan would come along, scoop up untold numbers of us, and carry us, at least for a time—in my own case, permanently—over the Republican line: ex-liberals, ex-Democrats, ex-Social Democrats, Reagan Democrats, and so forth.

But the place I was briefly occupying was a pleasant spot—and "pleasant" does not even come close to describing it. For an ardent anti-Communist, this was home. Muravchik and his "fraction" were the very best of comrades—a term they themselves had long since ceased to use. And when, not long after, I found myself where I actually belonged, on the Right, I once again discovered, looking around, a goodly number of my old companions moving along behind and beside me. We came to be labeled neoconservatives, or neocons. Though it no doubt hurt at least some of them to say so, their old foes within the Socialist party had seen the truth about them: they were not, and had not for a very long time been, true members of the Left. Gompers, Meany, Kirkland, and an abstraction called trade unionism had enabled them to hang on for a while to their commitment to social justice as defined by the Left. But the very term "social justice" had turned sour, captured by the blame-America-first wing of the Democratic party, by the so-called "rights" movements, and, in the end, by large and unfriendly segments of the union movement as well.

Besides, the Left, along with its liberal hangers-on, was setting out in the early 1980's to launch a moral attack against the United States for entering, under Reagan, into a serious confrontation with the Soviet Union. For my new-old companions, this would no doubt have been the straw that broke the

* The split in the Socialist party that I alluded to earlier was between those, headed by Bayard Rustin, who now called themselves Social Democrats and who along with the leadership of the AFL-CIO supported the aims of the war in Vietnam, and those, headed by Michael Harrington, who now called themselves Democratic Socialists (or D-Soc's). The D-Soc's not only bitterly opposed the war but were convinced that their opponents were straying off the socialist reservation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

socialist camel's back if it had not already been broken for some time. For where could even the *idea* of social justice prosper in a world in which the United States had become a weak and second-rate power?

It is surely Joshua Muravchik's experience, first as a true socialist, next as an uncertain socialist, and finally as an ex-socialist that accounts not only for his book's air of easy familiarity but for its unusually dispassionate tone. The theories and claims and disputes he deals with have been, for him, virtually a lifelong affair, in play around him from, as it were, the womb. At the same time, all anger spent, he has managed to put a distance between himself and the acidity that seems so often to afflict disappointed dreamers.

The equilibrium achieved by Muravchik and many of his fellow former Social Democrats is, indeed, far from common in the history of the Left. To the contrary, *dis*equilibrium seems to have been built into the system from the beginning—the disequilibrium that springs from the collision of brute reality with false theory.

One of the great shocks to Marxist theory was administered by war. Thus, at the onset of World War I, the workers of the world—those theoretically inevitable agents of revolution—failed rather spectacularly to do their duty as predicted. As good and true members of an international community of interest, they were expected to lay down their arms and decline to fight their fellows. Instead, loyalty to fatherland or motherland—in other words, plain old patriotism—in every case trumped their common status as proletarians. Only among intellectuals were there then (and are there now) people who even in wartime would place fidelity to their world-remaking ideas above concern for the security of their own community and country.

Nor has war been the only hindrance to the realization of socialist theory. As *Heaven on Earth* suggests but does not completely document, everywhere that socialist theory has been put into some semblance of practice, from a high civilization like Britain's to the most crudely organized ex-colony in Africa, it has resulted in a significant degree of immiseration. When challenged on this point, socialists used to say—some, it seems, still do say—that socialism has not yet really been tried. Which is a strange if psychologically convenient idea, considering that after more than 150 years the system has at one time or another or in one form or another been instituted, and has failed, in something like 80 different countries.

But disequilibrium, and even disgrace, have even now not stopped the socialist Left from theorizing onward—or from expressing its seemingly permanent disaffection from democratic systems that actually work. The socialist tradition is kept warm in Europe by a glow of hatred for the manners and mores of the United States, and in the United States by a magpie collection of "progressive" attitudes and ideas.

Those attitudes and ideas were on display again in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, when the downtrodden undeveloped world—that great abstraction so beloved of the Left—assumed a particularly ugly form and caused havoc and murder on our soil. Almost immediately, and all too predictably, agitated voices could be heard declaring that the United States, in retaliating for this assault, was really out once again to dominate the whole world; that masses of innocent Afghan civilians were about to be mercilessly slaughtered by American forces; and that here at home the government would take advantage of the impending war to snuff out civil liberties.

This time, however, the Left's tired, bewhiskered line—encountered most noticeably on the country's campuses but not there alone—also gave rise to some internal opposition. In particular, a very interesting dispute has broken out in the community clustered around the socialist quarterly *Dissent*. Since its founding by Irving Howe in the early 1950's, *Dissent* has remained the center of an especially somber kind of leftism—socialism with a heavy-hearted face. Now, in the magazine's spring 2002 issue, its co-editor, Michael Walzer—who if magazines had deans would by now have inherited from Howe the title of dean of *Dissent*—has published an essay that is critical of the way his fellow leftists responded to September 11 and the subsequent war on terrorism.

The essay, which was posted on the magazine's website in advance of publication, is entitled "Can There Be a Decent Left?" Walzer begins by noting that his fellow leftists, having initially opposed the war in Afghanistan, were thrown into some confusion by the discovery in late 2001 that the ordinary people of that country, far from feeling themselves victims of American imperialism, were enthusiastically embracing the arriving American forces as their liberators from Taliban oppression. Consequently, some of these leftists had become willing, albeit briefly and tentatively, to define the war itself as a humanitarian intervention, and therefore permissible from their point of view.

This, however, could not last. For, as Walzer writes, the simple purpose of the American war was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not humanitarian but preventive: to make it impossible for al Qaeda to go on training terrorists and organizing attacks on the United States. And *this* species of war was illegitimate in leftist eyes. And so the Left, reverting to type, soon began to insist that the United Nations be called in to adjudicate our dispute with Osama bin Laden, that any captured al Qaeda terrorists be tried in a properly constituted court of law, and that the war be conducted without endangering civilians. This final condition, Walzer tartly observes, would have made it impossible to engage in any fighting whatsoever, and was thus an extreme but characteristic example of the Left's willful denial of "one of the most basic and best understood moral distinctions: between premeditated murder and unintended killing."

WHICH BRINGS Walzer to the question that serves as the title of his essay: *can* there be a decent Left in the world's only superpower? Is it possible for his fellow leftists to sustain an intelligent, responsible, morally nuanced politics, or are they to remain forever enmired in the kind of resentment and unthinking hatred of American power that seems to have become the core of socialist passion?

True, Walzer concedes, the Left has its justifiable complaints, its list of American sins, ranging from our support of right-wing dictatorships during the cold war to our ill-begotten intervention in Vietnam, from our misadventures in Central America to our role today as the world's leading globalizer. All this, in Walzer's judgment, does give some warrant to the Left's characterization of the country as a bully—privileged, selfish, hedonistic, and corrupt. Still, September 11 was different, and there is little to excuse the Left's response to that event, its "failure to register the horror of the attack or to acknowledge the human pain it caused," its reflexive search for ways to place the onus of guilt on the United States.

In characterizing that response, Walzer does not hesitate to use words like "stupid, overwrought, and grossly inaccurate." And having thrown down these words, which must surely have made his comrades blanch, he goes on to adduce four tentative reasons for the Left's having so dramatically lost its bearings.

The first reason is the residual effect of old ideology. The Marxist theory of imperialism, along with newer, "third worldist" doctrines of the 1960's and 1970's, have blinded leftists to the power of religion in the modern world, writes Walzer. Believing that anyone who attacks America must represent the oppressed and hence be of the Left or allied with the Left, today's socialists do not understand that the al Qaeda movement is engaged in a different pursuit altogether: namely, holy war against the infidels. How many leftists, Walzer asks, have the intellectual wherewithal to *understand* such a thing as holy war?

The second reason is that leftist intellectuals tend to "live in America like internal aliens," bereft of power themselves and never expecting to gain any. In Walzer's judgment, this accounts for their inability or refusal to identify with their fellow Americans, their habit of regarding any hint of patriotic feeling as politically incorrect. (That the intellectual Left is powerless will come as a surprise to anyone remotely familiar with the world of American higher education or literary culture; but that is another matter.)

The third and fourth reasons are closely related. There is "the moral purism of blaming America first"; and there is the sense of guilt that comes from living in a rich and privileged country, which presumably disqualifies one from criticizing the behavior of those who are weaker and poorer.

What, Walzer asks, ought to be done about the Left's indecency? By his own reckoning, his agenda for reform (which follows the order of his four reasons) is a modest one. First, he says, one must defend the major, enduring components of leftist values: secular enlightenment, human rights, and democratic government. Second, one must act as if the Left will not always be powerless, and engage with one's fellow citizens as if one were as responsible for their safety as they are for one's own. Third, one must accept an ambivalent relation to American power, acknowledging that it has had not only bad effects in the world but also good ones. And last, one must not hesitate to blame those who are blameworthy, even if they are third-world governments or actors.

Modest, Walzer's agenda assuredly is—and doubly so in ascribing to the Left alone such bedrock American commonplaces as secular enlightenment, human rights, and democratic government. And yet this agenda has elicited a heated response, duly posted on *Dissent*'s website, from members of his own editorial board. One of his respondents, Jo-Ann Mort, denies the existence of any relation whatsoever between the socialist Left described by Michael Walzer and the socialist Left she embraces as her own. True, she writes, there may be a few deluded souls in the academy—professors and students who, as she puts it, "follow the Chomskys." But she and her comrades are another kettle of ide-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

alists, being people whose views are "represented by the dictum of swords to ploughshares, lifting strangers from Egypt, . . . the voices arguing not against intervention but for truly multilateral intervention that would strengthen, not diminish, world bodies in this era when, indeed, America is the sole superpower." Only multilateralism, Mort adds, can save us from American hegemony, and "aid us in putting a damper on the use of American superpower force."

Another respondent, David Bensman, is even more insistent that American unilateralism "threatens . . . to feed our sense of righteousness and moral superiority"—two qualities that are "greater threats to Americans, and citizens around the world, than are all the terrorists." Still another, James B. Rule, is angry with Walzer for insinuating that "criticism of America's military activities necessarily stems from lack of concern for American suffering or failed patriotism." Walzer, Rule complains, asks whether there can be a decent Left in the world's only superpower; what he *ought* to have asked is, do we want to live in a world dominated by a superpower, especially by the kind of superpower being created under our political noses by the likes of George W. Bush? And then there is Ann Snitow, who, though somewhat more kindly disposed to Walzer's description of the Left's current malaise, insists that "the only path toward reducing massacres and ethnic cleansing is a (yes, slow) process of building a world consensus against military solutions to long-term problems."

Were there, one wonders, discussions at this level of unreality going on around the samovars in the Russia of 1917? Surely there were. But then Lenin came along and defined for future generations of smug chatterers what exactly should be understood by such terms as "justice" and "consensus." Similarly at the onset of World War II, when, for a time, the question for debate among certain groups of leftists was which of the two imperialisms, British or German, one hoped to see destroyed first—and when a young Trotskyist named Irving Howe could find it in his heart to give only "conditional support" to the Allies.

Michael Walzer is a man widely admired and rewarded for the graces of his mind and prose, and one would like to know his real thoughts about the response of his fellow *Dissent*niks to his challenge. Notwithstanding words like "stupid, overwrought, and grossly inaccurate," his critique of them was, after all, rather gently couched. Thus, in admonishing his colleagues to take as much responsibility for the safety of their fellow citizens as their fellow citizens do for theirs, he pointedly avoided accusing them of being unpatriotic—which, in unwaltzed-around English, *could* be understood (as James B. Rule chose to understand it) to be what he was getting at. In no less gentle and backhanded a manner did he suggest that they were impermissibly ignorant, blind to the reality of religious fanaticism, and incapable—in the year 2002!—of holding third-world dictators to a single standard of political decency.

Nor—and this may be construed as his final act of gentleness—did Michael Walzer offer to follow the logic of his own argument, and to make an honest man of himself at last. For how does his essay conclude? Not with a declaration of intent to think about why the Left has, over and over again in the course of socialism's unhappy and costly history, proved so resistant to the making of "the most basic and best understood moral distinctions." On the contrary, his final words are: "The Left needs to begin again."

Again? Begin *again*? God help the world if it must now put itself through yet another laborious round of discovery and reassessment. Can there be a decent Left? Michael Walzer has read many, many books; for an answer to this particular question, he could do worse than to read Joshua Muravchik's. How much more misery and disappointment and suffering must the ordinary people of the globe endure in order that the squeamishness and moral vanity of the privileged may go on being forever tickled?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Birth of a Snob

Joseph Epstein

SNOBBERY: IS it innate, or learned? Snobs: are they born, or made? Perhaps the best way to begin answering this question is by adducing a case I happen to know fairly well—my own.

My social origins are a bit complicated: culturally lower-middle-class but with middle- and, later, upper-middle-class financial backing. Neither of my parents went to college. My father, who grew up in Canada, never even finished high school, while my mother took what was then known as "the commercial course" at a public high school in Chicago. They were both Jews but, as against the usual stereotype, evinced almost no interest in cultural matters apart from taking in the occasional musical comedy or, in later years, televised broadcasts of the Boston Pops. Magazines—*Life*, *Look*, later *Time*—and local newspapers came into our apartment, but no books. I cannot recall our owning an English dictionary, though both my parents were well spoken, always grammatical and jargon-free.

Politics was not a great subject of family conversation. The behavior of our extended family and neighbors, money, my father's relations with his customers, these made up the main conversational fare—unspeculative, nonhypothetical, all very specific. Higher education was another subject of little interest; no time was spent discussing the differences between Amherst and Williams, for the good reason that neither of my parents had ever heard of such places.

My father, I believe, lacked the least speck of snobbery. It would not have occurred to him to want to rise socially in the world, and the only people he himself looked down upon—apart from crooks of one kind or another—were those who seemed unwilling to take measured risks in business. A distant cousin was a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army: my father was baffled by the notion of a Jewish man so lacking in financial ambition as to settle for such a career.

It pleased my father to give ample sums to charities, many of them Jewish. In his later years, he also liked to travel to foreign countries—once, with my mother, to Paris on the Concorde, returning from London on the QE2. Above all, it pleased him to have earned enough money as a young man to establish his own financial independence, which he began to do at the age of seventeen, and to be of help to his family. But for him the realm to which money opened the door, the realm of status, style, and rank, was a mystery he felt no need to plumb.

My mother was also no snob, but she was much more aware of the phenomenon. She had an unashamed taste for what, by her standard, passed for *luxe*—big cars (Cadillacs), lavish furniture, furs, expensive dresses, Italian shoes, jewelry. But she was also made a bit nervous by people with more

JOSEPH EPSTEIN, *the author of ten books of essays and a volume of short stories, is a veteran contributor to* COMMENTARY. *The present essay is drawn from his new book,* Snobbery: The American Version, *to be published in July by Houghton Mifflin.* *Copyright © 2002 by Joseph Epstein.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

money than she, and tended to arrange her social life among her financial equals or inferiors. On the alert for snobberies turned against *her*, she sought out women friends who were goodhearted and generous, as was she. I never saw either my mother or my father commit a socially mean act: I never saw them put down anyone beneath them for reasons one would think to call snobbish, or fawn over anyone better off than they.

HOW, THEN, did I, the elder of their two sons, develop so keen a sense, almost from the onset of consciousness, of the various arrangements that make for snobbery: social class, money, taste, attainment, status of every kind? Already as a small boy I sensed who was richer than who, noticed people who lived more grandly or more poorly than we, grasped what excited the envy of others, felt stirrings of envy of my own. Where all this came from I cannot say even now, but it was there, and it has never left me.

When people gathered in my parents' apartment, I could not help registering that the wealthier men generally did most of the talking, or at least talked with the greatest authority and were listened to with the greatest attention. There was also a pleasant man named Sam Cowling, who lived nearby and made his living as a comedian on a popular radio show called *The Breakfast Club*: a certain allure attached to him, too. Money and celebrity, I early recognized, counted for quite a bit in the world, and certain sorts of work carried greater prestige than others—as, in baseball, shortstop was a more admired position than second base and, in football, quarterback than interior lineman.

In grammar school on Chicago's north side, I was able to arrange to play both shortstop and quarterback. I also became fairly good at tennis, a sport whose emphasis on stylishness, which tends to vaunt appearance over reality, has endowed it with much snob appeal. And there was snobbery aplenty when I went on to Nicholas Senn high school, where status was at least as carefully calibrated as at the court of the Sun King, though the food was less good and the clothes a great deal less ornate.

The school had roughly 50 clubs, fraternities, and sororities, each with its own colorful jackets. Some sported Greek-letter names: Alpha, Beta, Delta. Some bore the names of animals, real or mythological—Ravens, Condors, Gargoyles—or names with aristocratic shadings such as Dukes, Majestics, Imperials, and Gentry, or neologisms like Raynors, Chiquitas, Fidels. The social character of each was distinct, and known to the student body at large: this club had the best athletes, that sorority the cutest girls, this fraternity the most fearsome thugs, that the dreariest nerds.

It did not take me long to crack the code. In those days I commanded a superficial charm that allowed me to make friends easily, and I was soon invited to join a club that had some of the best athletes and a fraternity that included the most socially fluent boys. The ease with which this happened may have left me a touch jaded; during my senior year, invited to join a male honor society called Green & White, I became the first boy in the history of the school to turn it down. I didn't want it, I didn't need it, and, besides, I already understood that turning something down can often confer greater status than accepting it. From a fairly early age, I was a cunning statustician.

BECAUSE I was not a distinguished student, and because my family had no knowledge of the social and financial implications of attending one of the better American colleges, I went from high school to the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, a school that in those days, for state residents, featured an open-enrollment policy and low fees (though it also flunked out large numbers of students). Illinois was one of the most Greek—that is, most fraternity- and sorority-ridden—campuses in the United States. With my talent for making myself acceptable, I arranged to be invited to join the best Jewish fraternity on campus. (I add—with a slight shudder of shame I cannot shake off more than 40 years later—that I left behind my two best friends, who were not similarly invited.) If I emphasize the word "Jewish," it is not only to characterize the membership but to stress that virtually all fraternities and sororities in the mid-1950's were segregated by religion: most discriminated against Jews, and some against Catholics.

Did being Jewish increase my sensitivity to the realm of social snobbery? Undoubtedly. Although an agnostic in religion, my father was adept at sniffing out evidences of anti-Semitism, having lived with a great deal of it among the Quebecois in Montreal when he was a boy and then, at a distance, through the nightmare of Hitler's genocide during World War II. One of his few repeated admonitions to me was to be on the *qui vive* for anti-Jewish sentiment—which, he insisted, could crop up anywhere. "People might hate you," he would say, "for no better reason than your name. Be careful. Stay on the alert." And of course anti-Semitism itself may be the first and is certainly the longest-lasting and most virulent form of snobbery, one

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that, like racism, is always capable of turning into something vastly worse.

I never found myself much upset by the religious segregation practiced in the Midwest in the years I was growing up. That Jews were not wanted in Gentile fraternities at the University of Illinois was not in the least troubling to me. My insouciance may itself have been a form of snobbery—in this case, Jewish snobbery (who needs them!). But the fact is that I never felt it a serious social deprivation to be excluded from any fraternity or club, or from restricted neighborhoods and suburbs in and around Chicago, of which there then were quite a few.

In any case, the entire status system under which I had operated up to that point was about to change radically. After a year at Illinois, where I did well in my studies, I applied to and was accepted at the University of Chicago, which turned out to be an entirely different kettle of caviar.

MIKE NICHOLS, the movie director and former comedian, who was at the University of Chicago roughly four years before me, has said of it that everyone there was "neurotic, weird, strange—it was paradise." I'm not so sure about the paradise part, but about the neurotic, weird, and strange no argument is possible. One of the strangest things about Chicago was that life there was not founded on any status system I had hitherto known.

At Chicago, I found, people were not ranked by physical beauty, or athletic skill, or wealth, or family connections. None of these things seemed to matter. What mattered was intelligence—or, more precisely, intellectuality, which I would define as the ability to deal in a sophisticated way with the issues presented by art, science, politics, and things of the mind generally. Since my own intellectual quality was then of an inferior order, my status at Chicago was commensurately low. Hiding my ignorance as best I could, I looked on, fascinated. Here was a new game, and one I wanted, still somewhat inchoately, to play.

As I was to discover, Chicago had its own built-in status system, although no one enunciated what it was. In this system, only four vocations in life were considered to possess any standing: artist; scientist (including medical researcher, but not some dopey physician treating people for the flu or for their urological problems); statesman (none was then thought to be extant); or—and here was the loophole—the teacher of potential artists, scientists, and statesmen. All else, no matter how great the attendant financial or professional reward, was regarded as worthless. One was just another commoner, a natural slave (in Aristotle's term), raking gravel under the blazing sun.

Had I gone to Harvard, Princeton, or Yale, I might conceivably have adopted snobbery of a more conventional, social kind—though, so barren of social distinction was the family I grew up in, this would have been no easy thing to bring off. But artistic, intellectual, and cultural snobbery gave me quite enough to do. As a would-be intellectual, I soon found myself comfortably contemptuous of the middle class (from which I happily derived), its values and style of living. As someone with declared cultural interests, I began to look down on businessmen, on cultural philistines, on anyone, really, who thought there were more important things in life than art and ideas. Other people might achieve success—I would seek significance.

For the most part, I kept these snobbish notions to myself, and I hope I never appeared as preposterous to others as I assuredly was in the inner drama I was then living. Still, I carried a heavy freight of artiness and intellectuality, all the while forgoing the more innocent affectations—material possessions, membership in favored clubs or groups, a socially advantageous romantic match—by which most people hope to establish their superiority.

This lasted for several years, at least until my thirties. Touches of it invade my thinking even today, as I sense my superiority clicking in whenever a friend or relative expresses admiration for a cultural artifact I happen to think beneath seriousness. Someone tells me that he considers *Death of a Salesman* to be a great play, and my mind goes, click!—what a foolish opinion, betraying a want of intellectual subtlety, a crudity of sensibility. (My own view of Arthur Miller's play is close to that of the real salesman who, leaving the theater, is supposed to have said to his friend, "That New England territory was never any goddamn good.")

What is operating here is the snobbery of opinion, or, more precisely, of correct opinion. A person who is not himself a snob is usually content to think a wrong opinion mistaken, and to let it go at that; the very fact that another person holds such an opinion is not regarded as an adverse judgment on his character. For the intellectual snob, a wrong opinion is more than stupid; it is an utter disqualification.

THE TRICK in judging the operations of snobbery, in oneself or in others, lies in the ability to determine a thing's intrinsic value and then to weigh it against the value assigned by society. Behind every snobbish impulse is a false or irrelevant valuation. Like the cynic in Oscar Wilde's famous

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

definition, the snob knows "the price of everything and the value of nothing."

Thus, I drive a Jaguar S-type: a fairly expensive car, costing roughly $45,000, that also happens to be very reliable and comfortable and handsomely designed, and a pleasure to drive. I bought it, I like to believe, for its inherent quality and not for what other people might think of it. Yet I sometimes feel myself unduly pleased with this car. It is, I have concluded, not as vulgar as a Mercedes; it has none of the gaudiness of a Cadillac; it is blessedly free of the parvenu air of a Lexus. Danger: snobbishness at work.

But it is not so simple as that. Once upon a time, thinking to divest myself of such silly games, I made it a point to drive only dull cars: Chevys, mid-sized Oldsmobiles, and the like. This, however, was just reverse snobbery, the chief mechanism of which consists in finding out which way the snobs are headed and then turning oneself in the opposite direction.

I have a thing about San Francisco, one of the great centers of snobbery in America. The city's boosters, who seem to include everyone who lives there, work hard to convey the impression that they above all their countrymen have found the secret of life. Their voluble insistence on their own good taste—Bayarrhea, I prefer to call it—can be richly, profoundly unbearable, bringing out the reverse snob in me as quickly as it brings out the snob in others.

Reverse snobbery, being a compound form of the phenomenon that proceeds from the exceedingly snobbish determination to assert one's superiority to snobbery itself, may be even more difficult to shuck than the original disease. It can also be punishing, depriving one of certain on the whole innocent pleasures. Certain fads in dining, clothes, travel, hotels, neighborhoods, artworks—no sooner does the reverse snob learn that they have been picked up by people he regards as commonplace than he drops them at once. Twenty-five years ago I thought Humphrey Bogart was a swell actor; the Bogart cult killed my enthusiasm. I mock (to myself) people I know who buy what I think of as crappy modern art, and who pretend to enjoy it while hoping it will increase in value. I won't own an expensive watch, although I am not opposed to buying and wearing a knockoff of a Cartier or Bulgari on the streets of New York for fifteen or 25 bucks. ("It's an André Knokovsky," I say smugly, if anyone asks.)

Yet I also remain susceptible to snobbery of the more traditional sort. I continue to feel that delicious sense of false superiority whenever I stay in an expensive hotel (preferably at someone else's expense); good clothes elevate my spirits considerably. Though I don't think I'm a food snob, and have managed to evade wine snobbery altogether, I am a sucker for things like fine stationery, a splendid fountain pen, an elegant raincoat.

The pathetic truth is that I am a little too pleased with myself for snobbish reasons. Here I am, giving a lecture at an English university—how nice! Here I am, being praised in print by a writer I have long admired in a magazine of high status—splendid! Here I am, being paid obeisance by the wealthy and powerful for my cultural attainments—and, lo, the world seems a just and good place!

Time to grow out of such thoughts? Time to see the world as, in the philosophers' phrase, in itself it really is? Alas, snobbery, innate and learned alike, makes that easier said than done—at any rate, in this life.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

OBSERVATIONS

Tales of Suburban High

Kay S. Hymowitz

WHEN AMERICANS think about public education, they tend to see a stark divide. On the one hand, there are the failed school systems of our big cities, blackboard jungles where drugs abound, gangs rule the hallways, and dropouts outnumber the barely literate graduates. On the other hand, there are the shining, achievement-oriented public schools of the suburbs, the institutions that have led so many middle-class parents to flee New York City for Westchester or Chicago for Highland Park. In these greener pastures, public education seems to be working fine: students do not have to pass through metal detectors each morning, most of them go on to college, and their parents (according to opinion surveys) are basically content.

The problem with this picture, as we have learned in recent decades, is that, despite their obvious advantages, all is far from well in suburban schools. In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education cautioned that, across the country, SAT scores were flat, and students were falling behind their peers in other nations. College professors began to gripe about incoming students who, even with sterling records in high school, had never heard of the Renaissance, or thought Winston Churchill was a Civil War general.

Compounding these pedagogic worries have been concerns about the often poisonous social and moral environment of the high schools in more prosperous communities. After two teenagers turned Columbine High School in Colorado into a killing field in 1999, just about every suburban district in the country began fretting about potential violence. Many launched curriculums to combat sexual harassment, to root out homophobia, to discourage cattiness among girls, and, of course, to stop bullying among boys, the supposed root cause of the massacre at Columbine. More recently, cheating has become an issue, especially with the temptations posed by the Internet. In one much-publicized scandal, a biology teacher at a high school in suburban Kansas City discovered that 28 of her students had downloaded whole sections of their term papers. But when the teacher tried to fail the offenders, the superintendent and parents refused to back her up, apparently seeing nothing remarkable in the transgression. As one student told the chastened teacher, "We won."

That matters are as bad as these instances suggest is amply confirmed by two new books that take us inside the classrooms of today's suburban high school: Elinor Burkett's *Another Planet: A Year in the Life of a Suburban High School** and Denise Clark Pope's *Doing School: How We Are Creating a Generation of Stressed-Out, Materialistic, and Miseducated Students.*† Burkett, an astute journalist with many previous books to her name, introduces us to Prior Lake High School outside Minneapolis, an overwhelmingly white, middle-class school that sends its better graduates to state universities. The pseudonymous Faircrest High School described by Pope, a lecturer at Stanford's School of Ed-

KAY S. HYMOWITZ *is a contributing editor of* City Journal *and the author of* Ready or Not: What Happens When We Treat Children as Small Adults.

* HarperCollins, 336 pp., $26.00.

† Yale University Press, 240 pp., $24.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ucation, is located in a "wealthy California suburb," and is a more diverse institution. Though a third of its students are lower-income Hispanics, Filipinos, or blacks, it also boasts more National Merit scholars than Prior Lake, and more Ivy League aspirants.

For all their differences, both institutions are considered "good" schools. They feature plenty of Advanced Placement (AP) courses, college-hungry kids, and attentive teachers, and their facilities are so fine that one parent in Burkett's account, observing plans for a new school complete with archery and golf ranges, quipped that it looked more like a sports-entertainment complex. The question is: what exactly are these "good" schools good *at*?

AN INSTRUCTIVE place to start is with the teachers. In dress, demeanor, and interests, many of the pedagogues at Prior Lake High School can hardly be distinguished from the hormonal crew they are supposed to be educating. There is the math teacher who brags to his students that he has read only two books in his life, one about high-school football and the other about Elvis Presley. There is the English teacher, with bleached hair and a "Tommy" shirt (because "kids love brand names"), who performs card tricks for his students and regales them with stories about his lost career as a basketball player. And there is the memorable Sandra Sterge, an English teacher—I think—who makes constant sexual innuendos in class, calling attractive male students "hotties" and joking about spending the weekend with them at the Day's Inn.

I say I *think* Sandra Sterge is an English teacher, but it is hard to tell. She sees her role as making sure students "are happy and feel like they belong," which seems to boil down to keeping them entertained. We do not see this former beauty queen instructing students in grammar, essay-writing, or literature—the subjects traditionally associated with her profession. Instead Burkett shows her to us teaching public speaking with a "lip-sync unit," an exercise in which students rap songs with lyrics such as "I like big butts and I cannot lie" and "I'm long and I'm strong and I'm down to get the friction on."

Nor is Sterge alone at Prior Lake in using popular culture as a tool for . . . well, it is unclear for what. During study hall, students watch the melodramatic psychobabble of *The Maury Show*. The English department insists that students study *The Scarlet Letter*—the movie, not the book. Other teachers show educational fare like the cross-dressing Dustin Hoffman in *Tootsie*.

Keeping students properly diverted is also a key part of the program at Faircrest High in California. Especially striking is Pope's depiction of American-history classes. In one of them, the teacher assigns only two projects for the entire semester, so that the students can, in her words, focus "in-depth" and become "experts." As a practical matter, this means that aside from watching a few videos about World War II, they spend most of their time listening to each other's "brief, disconnected reports on . . . topics as varied as the history of the automobile or the life of Lucille Ball." Another history teacher begins a unit on the 1960's by dressing in a tie-dyed shirt and lighting incense.

As for Faircrest's elite AP course in American history, its chief distinction seems to be higher production values. Eve Lin (as Pope calls one of the school's star students) worked for 250 hours on her part of an "intensive" group research project. Pope describes the culmination of this effort, a presentation in which the members of the group, wearing NASA name tags and T-shirts, escort their classmates into a darkened room decorated with twinkling stars. Through several scene and costume changes, they take the class on makeshift rockets, show film clips about space travel, and, using cardboard cones and Styrofoam cups, demonstrate how the Apollo 13 crew managed to fix their damaged spacecraft—all of this while the music from *Star Wars* blasts in the background. The teacher pronounces the show "magnificent" and gives the group an A+.

Not all the teachers at Prior Lake and Faircrest confuse education with entertainment. Some are serious and demanding, and they attract the most motivated students. But almost all of these exceptional teachers seem to be tired soldiers from a different era, readying themselves for retirement. One math teacher at Prior Lake, a veteran of 27 years, drives her calculus students so hard that they get perfect scores on the AP test at twice the national rate. While most students at the school do a total of two or three hours of homework a week, hers do more than that for her class alone.

But with no school-wide policies on matters like tardiness, plagiarism, and grading, even the most conscientious teachers find themselves without support, and sorely tempted to compromise their standards. Sick of excuses for unfinished homework, they hand out worksheets to be completed in class and hold special study groups before each test, resigned to the fact that their students will cram the past month's assignments into a single all-nighter. The hard-driving calculus teacher at Prior Lake compares her school to East Berlin before the wall fell, a place where "nobody did much work because rewards bore little relationship to merit."

WHAT MAY be the saddest part of these accounts is that the students at Prior Lake and Faircrest are not the least bit engaged by the "edutainment" that increasingly dominates their curriculum. To the contrary, they are often contemptuous of their chummy, "with-it" teachers.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Eve Lin walks away from the NASA demonstration knowing that her A+ does not add up to much. "All that work for a one-hour performance.... I think people really underestimate what students can do." Others are disgusted by the condescension they constantly experience in the classroom. "She thinks she redefines cool," says one student of Sandra Sterge, the lip-sync queen. "I'm embarrassed for her. Can't she behave like an adult?"

Still, unlike their inner-city peers, the vast majority of these middle-class kids accept their tiresome four years as fate, a necessary prelude to college, which is itself a necessary prelude to a good paycheck. They do not play hooky, threaten teachers, or get into knife fights. Rather, they size up the situation and treat high school like a game, knowing what it takes to win. As one girl tells Burkett, "You can get all A's without learning anything."

This is what Pope means by "doing school," and it takes many forms. Students sign up for courses that include a lot of group projects and then befriend smarter, more conscientious classmates who will perform most of the work. They try to be "interactive," as they sometimes put it, asking a question every few minutes to impress the teacher even as they sit at their desks doing homework for the next class. They whine that a test was too hard, even—or especially—if they know it was not. They try to win over teachers by asking how their training for the marathon is going or whether they enjoyed a weekend date. "I have no interest in the personal lives of the teachers," one girl says of the young man who teaches her government course, "but it's a game, and Mr. Carr is losing."

Whenever possible, they also pick teachers who are reputed to be easy graders or who assign journals or "creative writing" instead of research papers or tests. One of the five "ideal students" whom Pope follows in her book chooses to write her English report on Cesar Chavez—not for reasons of political commitment but because she has saved an A paper about him that she wrote in middle school. They use Cliff's Notes and log onto sparknotes.com to get summaries of the books they are supposed to read, and if such resources do not provide enough help, they cheat.

In all of this, moreover, the students are actively aided and abetted by their parents. In an interview with the *Atlantic Monthly*, Burkett said that nothing shocked her more about Prior Lake than the attitude of the parents, who see themselves not as the allies of the teachers and administrators but as their children's agents. If a teacher is too academically demanding, they lobby to get their child transferred to another class. If junior's grades flag, they demand extra-credit work to let him bring them up. And they gripe: "Why isn't my child getting a higher grade?" "My son never got a B before." As Burkett writes of Prior Lake, "I didn't meet one teacher there demoralized by the low pay. But I met dozens of teachers demoralized by abusive parents who were not willing to let them do their jobs by holding kids to higher standards or by making them work."

Their authority undermined at every turn—not least by their own behavior—teachers find that order in their classrooms is pretty much dependent on adolescent whim. After being called to task for runaway talking, one girl at Prior Lake protests, "It's not my fault, I have ADHD [Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder]." A special-ed student whose disability gives him the right to copies of a teacher's lecture notes feels free to sleep during class. At Faircrest, when several students pull down their pants and moon their classmates, a teacher can do nothing more than tell them to "cut it out."

One of Pope's subjects, a talented but underchallenged student named Michelle, finds herself paired for a project with a class slacker who failed the last test and had not done the reading since the fall, when she lost her textbook. Just as Michelle begins their joint presentation, her partner saunters out of the classroom to go to the bathroom. Michelle presents the material as her classmates take notes. "Slow down!" they yell. "Shit, you weren't supposed to write a book!" The teacher pleads, "Be nice" and "No swearing," but no one listens.

IN HER inability to make sense of these chaotic scenes, Denise Clark Pope unwittingly illustrates how little our self-styled education experts have to tell us about the problems of suburban schools. She views Faircrest through the prism of ed-school cliché. Such schools, she argues, are too focused on achievement and competition, and give short shrift to cooperative learning—even as her examples demonstrate that the latter approach simply leaves the better students to carry the weaker ones. She also suggests, contradictorily, that they do not provide enough opportunities for individualized learning—even as Faircrest students choose paper or research topics that let them get away with as little original work as possible.

Pope is right to object to the cynicism of the game the schools ask their students to play, but she offers no vision of what an educated person should look like. Her chief concern is that young people become "passionately committed" to learning; *what* they learn seems to be a matter of indifference. As she sees it, a Faircrest student who adores her Mexican dance class and another who is deeply involved in his community-service project are models of educational excellence.

Elinor Burkett, who comes to her subject with fewer preconceptions and more curiosity, provides a fresher picture of the suburban high school. But she is no more able than Pope to explain what she has so as-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tutely observed. Indeed, as their two accounts make clear, *none* of the usual suspects takes us very far in assigning blame for the stubborn mediocrity of schools like Prior Lake and Faircrest.

Multiculturalism certainly does not play much of a role; Burkett notes that most of the assigned books are by white males. Nor are the educators at these schools sophisticated enough to have been corrupted by postmodernism—most have not heard of Faulkner, much less Foucault. Burkett makes a strong case for the woeful influence of the religion of self-esteem, but this too seems insufficient. Indulgent as they may be at times, teachers and parents alike do set real goals for the students. At both schools, caffeine-driven, sleep-deprived teenagers have date books crammed with lab-report assignments, church activities, tennis practice, theater and band rehearsals, student-council meetings, and part-time jobs. Finally, the schools impose a measure of order and discipline. Administrators search students' cars, test them for drugs, send them home for wearing T-shirts with provocative messages, and even take them to task for hanging out with the wrong people.

Why, then, do so many middle-class Americans now act as if education is nothing more than a "game"? The ultimate culprits no doubt lie deep in our national character, and most of all in our relentless pragmatism, which here expresses itself in the inability of a single adult in this educational universe to offer a broader view. Along with any serious commitment to subjects like English and history, the idea of education as a way to sharpen mental discipline, to cultivate higher cultural interests, or to teach civic principles has simply disappeared. The course offerings at Prior Lake include journalism, theater, stress management, and "death education" (which includes field trips to a cemetery and an undertaker), and educators now refer to activities like student council and football as "co-curricular" rather than "extra-curricular."

When everyone accepts that education is simply a means to acquire a McMansion and an SUV, the distinction between reading a classic novel and producing an entertaining video dissolves, especially if both efforts are rewarded with a coveted A. When students see teachers standing in front of them lighting incense or nodding approvingly during student presentations about *I Love Lucy*, it is perfectly understandable if they conclude that these adults have nothing serious to offer them, and are undeserving of their respect.

In a discussion of Thomas Jefferson during an honors class at Prior Lake, students demand, "How is this relevant to my life?" When the subject is the Electoral College, they complain, "Why do we have to learn this?" To some extent, this is just typical adolescent provocation. But the truth is, their teacher, an amiable but vapid young man whose literary taste has never evolved beyond John Grisham, does not have the slightest idea how to answer them—how to explain, that is, the importance of something like citizenship, which does not impinge directly on their immediate wants and needs.

But teenagers are not simply looking to be amused and flattered. At the end of her book, Burkett is surprised to run into one class goof-off who, after graduation, had enlisted in the Marines. He finished basic training with a perfect score on his final exam. "In boot camp," he tells her, "they kick your butt if you don't try your hardest."

Most graduates of our suburban high schools must wait until after graduation—if then—to experience satisfaction of this sort. The education they receive during the decisive years of adolescence not only fails to spark their intellectual and moral imaginations, it hardly even tries. Instead it aims to produce students like Eric, a top academic achiever at Prior Lake, highly regarded by his teachers. "My belief is that every part of life is a game," he tells Burkett. "The question is: what can I get away with before it's a problem."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Observations

The Ashes of Napoleon

Algis Valiunas

Victor Hugo was a madman who thought he was Victor Hugo, quipped the French dramatist Jean Cocteau. If that is so, how crazy did Napoleon have to be in order to think he was Napoleon? Making oneself the supreme French writer of the 19th century may have required an immense capacity for self-aggrandizement; becoming the very embodiment of French glory and the greatest man of action since Julius Caesar—getting a million of his countrymen to die for his name and causing the death of four million others—called for a sense of ordained magnificence beside which even the most monumental egotism pales.

As Paul Johnson points out in his dazzlingly compendious new biography in the Penguin Lives series, more books have been written about Napoleon than about any other man except for Jesus Christ. But one is not sorry to see the biographical ranks swell by three more volumes as good as Johnson's *Napoleon** and Robert Asprey's double-decker production, *The Rise of Napoleon Bonaparte* and *The Reign of Napoleon Bonaparte*.† Both Johnson's and Asprey's are disenchanted renderings that strip the legend of its gold and ermine and reckon the cost that numberless men and women paid for the brief season of Napoleonic splendor.

The rise and the reign were as brilliant as the fall was welcome and salutary. Here is the briefest of recitations. Napoleon was born in Corsica in 1769, of a noble but impoverished family with Tuscan roots; at the age of nine was sent off as a scholarship boy to a French royal military academy; in 1789, as a twenty-year-old army officer, practiced a harsh form of crowd control on revolutionary mobs; signed on with the Revolution when it became apparent the monarchy was done for; dabbled in Corsican politics until he and his family were expelled from their homeland; wrote a romantic novel; made his name at the siege of Toulon in 1793 against a force of royalists supported by Spanish and British troops, and was promoted from captain directly to brigadier general; was imprisoned during the Terror, but eluded the guillotine; turned cannon on a Parisian mob bent on a coup in 1795, and effectively signaled the end of the Revolution; led the invasion of Italy in 1796; conquered Egypt in 1798, taking with him a cohort of intellectuals and artists who produced monumental works of Orientalist scholarship; was appointed first consul under the new constitution in 1799, a position that gave him more power than Louis XIV had enjoyed; whipped the Austrians in Italy once again in 1800; made himself consul for life in 1802; responded to a plot against his life in 1803 by arranging the murder of the young Duc d'Enghien, whom he almost certainly knew to be innocent; styled himself the modern Justinian for his extensive legislative reform in 1804, establishing the Civil Code, which abolished the vestiges of feudalism and would later be known as the Napoleonic Code; crowned himself emperor in 1804; defeated the Austrians and Russians at Austerlitz in 1805, widely re-

Algis Valiunas *is the author of* Churchill's Military Histories, *just out from Rowman & Littlefield.*

* Viking, 208 pp., $19.95.

† Basic Books, vol. 1, 580 pp., $35.00; vol. 2, 608 pp., $37.50.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

garded as his greatest victory; established the Continental System, which proscribed the import or passage of British goods and ensured war to the bitter end with England; contributed significantly to the cause of European Jewish emancipation, but later clamped down on Jewish economic activity and freedom of movement; launched an especially brutal and ultimately unsuccessful war against Spain in 1808, immortalized by Goya's fearsome drawings and etchings; made the irreparable blunder of invading Russia in 1812; lost the battle of Leipzig in 1813; abdicated in 1814, giving up the rule of France for exile on the Mediterranean island of Elba; tired of exile by 1815, and returned to France with a force of 700 men, restoring the empire unopposed; met his final defeat by Wellington and Blücher at Waterloo; was exiled to Saint Helena, in the middle of the South Atlantic, and remained there until his death in 1821.

THERE IS a historiographic tradition, naturally enough most vital in France, that holds up Napoleon as the champion of democratic liberalism, who broadcast the Rights of Man throughout a benighted aristocratic Europe. Paul Johnson will have none of this. Although Napoleon presented himself as "the Enlightenment embodied, bringing rationality and justice to peoples hitherto ruled in the interests of privileged castes," and although he may even have believed to some degree in the image he presented, the reality of his rule belied the magniloquent professions of moral generosity. The very peoples who cheered him as their liberator came in due course to think of him as a tyrant worse than his predecessors.

What Napoleon did best was generalship, and he did it far better than anyone else. As Johnson writes, "Bonaparte's strategy of lightning wars, aimed at bringing his opponents one by one to a large-scale battle, destroying their army, and occupying their capital, then imposing a punitive peace, was a highly successful formula." By the same token, abandoning this formula ensured his defeat at Waterloo, where Napoleon was dilatory about striking northward into Belgium because he wanted the Allies to be the aggressors and thus to grant him the moral advantage. He should have thought like a soldier and not like a politician.

Earlier in his reign, however, he should have thought more like a statesman and less like a soldier. All war, all the time, had become Napoleon's hallmark—he really did not have much use for peace—and it was more than France could bear. One of the strengths of Asprey's biography lies in its deft tracing of the growing French reluctance to pursue their master's dreams of glory. Even the brave wearied of having their bravery taxed to its limits. The baubles and gold braid with which Napoleon rewarded his men lost their luster, and bourgeois serenity started to look awfully enticing. The Napoleonic cult of honor could not last.

And it was, after all, the emperor's honor—the mark he would leave on history—that was paramount. The heroic Corsican liberator Pasquale Paoli, the second greatest man that island produced, told the young Napoleon: "There is nothing modern in you; you are entirely out of Plutarch." He was right. Well versed in the writings of the ancient biographer, Napoleon looked to the classical world and especially to Rome for exemplars of virtuous manhood. So had the French revolutionaries before him, but whereas they found their inspiration in the Roman republic, Napoleon turned in endless bemusement to the grandeur of the empire, whose supreme genius was Julius Caesar. This model of greatness in war beckoned to him across the centuries, and Napoleon followed devotedly and ecstatically, writing at one point: "He crossed the Rubicon with only a single legion, seized thirty cohorts at Corfinium, and drove Pompey from Italy in three months. What swiftness! What suddenness! What audacity!"

A Caesar bends every thought and action to winning power and glory, and is willing quite casually to snuff out anyone who stands in his way; these are the principal lessons that Plutarch himself draws in his admiring life of the emperor. Julius Caesar's craving for dominance and renown was truly insatiable, and to this end he employed means of a brazen monstrosity that to Plutarch, and to Napoleon, were simply the marks of an invincible resolve. Caesar, Machiavelli, Napoleon—these were men who never lost their innocence; they enjoyed a clear conscience no matter what they might have said or done, and were answerable to nothing but their own appetites.

NUMEROUS WRITERS and thinkers of the 19th century, including some of the very greatest, shared a taste for this savage Napoleonic élan, and it is to them that we can turn for a somewhat more contemporary sense of the man and the thoughts he inspired. Napoleon did have his severe detractors, most notably Chateaubriand, Madame de Staël, Hugo, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy; but there was no shortage of writers eager to be the emperor's Plutarch. Paul Johnson informs us that Stendhal, Sir Walter Scott, and William Hazlitt all wrote laudatory full-dress biographies, Hazlitt's running to ten volumes. Although Johnson does not mention her, Jane Austen, of all people, gave serious thought to a biography. Heinrich Heine, Thomas Carlyle, Hillaire Belloc, G.K. Chesterton, Thomas Hardy, and George Bernard Shaw all fell under the imperial spell.

The modern cult of irrepressible thrusting energy uninhibited by outworn moral prescriptions, so characteristic of fascism and revolutionary Communism alike, large-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ly draws its force from the Napoleonic example, which in turn owes so much to the pagan classical world. Indeed, both those 19th-century figures who condemned Napoleon and those who applauded him recognized the fundamental egotism of his ends and the brutal callousness of his means. How far his admirers were willing to go in praising the emperor was a measure of their passion for the heroic pagan ideal as against their compassion for the sufferings of ordinary men.

Take, for example, the heroes of Stendhal's two great novels, Julien Sorel in *The Red and the Black* and Fabrizio del Dongo in *The Charterhouse of Parma*. Both these young men are marinated in fantasies of Napoleonic glory, but both come to a bad end. Julien, a provincial carpenter's son, gauges every stage in his social advancement against the standard of Napoleon's rise; early in his career, regular feedings of the Napoleonic legend sustain his hunger for wealth, power, and renown. Yet at the conclusion, in prison awaiting execution for the attempted murder of the woman he had seduced, Julien mentally lambastes Napoleon for "pure charlatanism," having himself evidently come to believe that his own misadventures were nothing but a species of malignant self-delusion.

A peculiarly American variant of the Stendhalian perspective is that of Ralph Waldo Emerson in his *Representative Men*. For Emerson, Napoleon enjoyed such widespread admiration because good, democratic men were *all* "little Napoleons," "subordinating all intellectual and spiritual forces into means to a material success." The man who had aimed at the world's richest prizes, and who snatched an armload, was a figure suited to the climbing, grasping temperament of a middle class newly empowered.

Emerson is not entirely against that temperament: his Napoleon serves as the grandest example of "how much may be accomplished by the mere force of such virtues as all men possess in less degree; namely, by punctuality, by personal attention, by courage, and thoroughness." Still, he asks, "what was the result of this vast talent and power?" It was "no result. All passed away, like the smoke of his artillery, and left no trace. He left France smaller, poorer, feebler, than he found it; and the whole contest for freedom was to be begun again."

BUT THE most interesting 19th-century literary reactions to Napoleon were those of Goethe, Nietzsche, and Victor Hugo. Goethe's sublime moral carelessness would seem to have made him a choice prospect for the Napoleonic charm. He was—but with a difference. In a passage of coruscating comic verve, Johnson relates an encounter between the emperor and the greatest contemporary writer at a gathering of kings and princes in Erfurt in 1808.

Napoleon, it seems, wanted Goethe for his own, and called him to a private audience. After the writer had been left standing a good while to watch the emperor swallow his breakfast, Napoleon looked up and declared, "*Voilà un homme*" ("there is a man"). Proceeding to inform Goethe that he had read *The Sorrows of Young Werther* seven times, he asked him, as a personal favor, to come to Paris to revive the French theater with plays about "how a great man, a modern Caesar, can bring general happiness to mankind." Goethe, who had been flattered before, ably deflected these overtures, causing the master of Europe to leave off being charming and bury his nose in a report on the Polish question. On his way out, the poet caught an overpowering whiff of the eau de cologne with which the emperor liked to slather his person.

This encounter left its mark. On some later occasions, Goethe was given to speak of Napoleon as a being of the rarest quality, or so Johann Peter Eckermann records in his *Conversations with Goethe*. Thus, on March 11, 1828, Goethe hailed the emperor as a "demigod," one whose destiny "was more brilliant than any the world had seen before him, or perhaps will ever see after him." But on other occasions, contemplating Napoleon's ruin, he spoke in quite a different vein: "When we reflect that such an end befell a man who had trampled underfoot the life and happiness of millions, his fate appears after all very mild. . . . Napoleon affords an example of the danger of elevating oneself to the Absolute."

Friedrich Nietzsche, by contrast, thought Napoleon the supreme modern man of action—the highest accolade in his philosophical vocabulary. For him, it was democracy, the sickly inheritor of a contemptible Christian morality, that was the curse of modern life, spawning cripples who pretended to be spiritual heroes. What Goethe had disparaged as the Napoleonic elevation of the individual will to the Absolute was exactly what Nietzsche found so appealing. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, he wrote: "Like a last signpost to the *other* path, Napoleon appeared, the most isolated and late-born man there has ever been, and in him the problem of the *noble ideal as such* made flesh." As Alex-ander had cut the Gordian knot, so Napoleon with a stroke of his sword had solved the problem of synthesizing the "inhuman and superhuman": the creative man of action must be a destroyer, and Napoleon was unquestionably that.

Given Nietzsche's general perspective on life, it is little wonder that he should have despised Victor Hugo, regarding the great French novelist as a shameless purveyor of saccharine romance and moral grandiosity. One need only look at the chapters on Waterloo in *Les misérables* to see what Nietzsche meant. For Hugo, the ultimate reason Napoleon lost the battle was that God Himself brought him down. ("Na-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

poleon had been impeached before the Infinite, and his fall was decreed. He vexed God. Waterloo is not a battle; it is the change of front of the universe.") When Hugo speaks in this vein, he is the mouthpiece of the Almighty, and he is not exactly humble about his own appointed role. One suspects that Tolstoy's historical disquisitions in *War and Peace* owe a large debt to Hugo, and this theological legacy does not show either novelist to his best advantage.

At the same time, however, and quite apart from his views of history and Providence, there is in Hugo the artist an imaginative sympathy with living beings of every kind that overwhelms all philosophical objections and that shows democratic art at its fullest emotional reach. To Nietzsche, of course, this imaginative sympathy was so much tiresome weepiness, and represented the democratic spirit at its most insufferable. But Hugo was hardly antiwar as a matter of principle, and his fervid *j'accuse* of Napoleon is wholly compatible with a principled admiration of men great in war who serve the cause of freedom (one thinks of such defenders of their country's liberty as Marlborough, Nelson, Wellington, or Churchill). Here, at any rate, again from *Les misérables*, is Hugo's cascading eloquence on the death of a nameless French soldier at Waterloo:

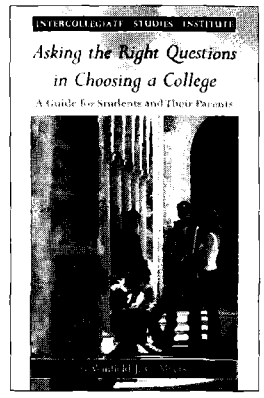
> If anything is frightful, if there be a reality which surpasses dreams, it is this: to live, to see the sun, to be in full possession of manly vigor, to have health and joy, to laugh sturdily, to rush toward a glory which dazzlingly invites you on, to feel a very pleasure in respiration, to feel your heart beat, to feel yourself a reasonable being, to speak, to think, to hope, to love; to have mother, to have wife, to have children, to have sunlight, and suddenly, in a moment, in less than a minute, to feel yourself buried in an abyss, to fall, to roll, to crush, to be crushed, to see the grain, the flowers, the leaves, the branches, to be able to seize upon nothing, to feel your sword useless, men under you, horses over you, to strike about you in vain, your bones broken by some kick in the darkness, to feel a heel which makes your eyes leap from their sockets, to grind the horseshoes with rage in your teeth, to stifle, to howl, to twist, to be under all this, and to say: just now I was a living man!

Presented with a force that no historian has been able to summon, this is *the* indictment of Napoleon. If Nietzsche thrills to the thought of the nonpareil general and ruler—greater than Caesar, greater even than Napoleon himself—whom he hopes the future will yet produce, Hugo speaks for every last soldier whose suffering the actual emperor Napoleon regarded with lordly indifference. Multiply this case by some five million, as Hugo tacitly compels you to do, and you begin to measure the cost of Napoleonic glory and its demonic idolatry of the self. At our own distance, struck dumb by the sheer overpowering scale both of the glory and of the gore, one can only hope the world will be spared the cold blazing dominion of another such paragon.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ask the Right Questions...

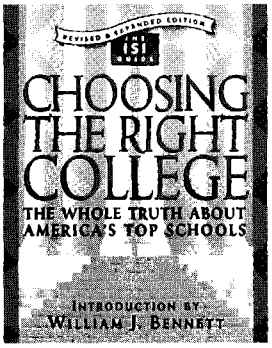
Every summer, students and their parents travel to college campuses across the United States. **When you make the trip, will you know what questions to ask?**


INTERCOLLEGIATE STUDIES INSTITUTE
Asking the Right Questions in Choosing a College
A Guide for Students and Their Parents

The Intercollegiate Studies Institute's pamphlet, *Asking the Right Questions in Choosing a College*, helps guide you through this important decision by covering issues of academic life, student life, and the political atmosphere on campus.

Download *Asking the Right Questions* at www.isi.org, or email freeguide@isi.org to request a copy by mail.

...Choose the Right College


REVISED & EXTENDED EDITION
ISI
CHOOSING THE RIGHT COLLEGE
THE WHOLE TRUTH ABOUT AMERICA'S TOP SCHOOLS
INTRODUCTION BY WILLIAM J. BENNETT

Once you have made the campus visit, find out what the tour guides did not tell you in *Choosing the Right College: The Whole Truth About America's Top Schools*.

"...Tough-minded analysis of the quality of instruction, the level of academic standards, the campus political atmosphere, and the extent to which the liberal arts tradition is respected...." - William J. Bennett

Preview *Choosing the Right College* at www.collegeguide.org, or call (800) 526-7022 to order yours for only $18.00.

Give the Gift of Learning.

Since 1953, the **Intercollegiate Studies Institute** (ISI) has provided national educational programming to students. Seeking *"to educate for liberty,"* ISI identifies **America's best and brightest students** and nutures in them a love of learning and an appreciation of our founding principles.

Now you can help the Institute educate young people for liberty by contributing to the **ISI Annual Fund**. Your **tax-deductible donation** will help ISI conduct over 300 lectures and conferences on American campuses, distribute nearly 3 million publications, and provide fellowships. Learn more about ISI and make a donation at **www.isi.org,** or contact ISI's Development Office at (800) 536-7022.

ISI is a non-profit, non-partisan 501(c)(3) organization. Donations to ISI Annual Fund and other ISI funds are tax-deductible. Write to ISI at P.O. Box 4431, Wilmington, DE 19807-0431.

ISI

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MUSIC

What Was the Matter with Rachmaninoff?

Terry Teachout

IN 1927, the British music-hall duo Flotsam & Jetsam recorded a comic song, "What Was the Matter with Rachmaninov?," in which they lamented the popularity of the once-ubiquitous Prelude in C-Sharp Minor among hapless amateur pianists: "Then there's another one down the street/Who must be trying it with her feet/She's the one who gives you fits/Whenever she comes to the difficult bits."

It was not only in music halls, however, that Sergei Rachmaninoff was criticized for being too popular.[1] Few classical composers of significance have received so many unfavorable reviews over so long a period of time, and there can be little doubt that Rachmaninoff's bad press arose in large part from the fact that his compositions were hugely successful with concertgoers who disliked most other 20th-century music.

As recently as the 1970's, critical disdain for Rachmaninoff was so widespread that even his few open admirers, among them COMMENTARY's Samuel Lipman, struck a defensive note: "Whatever Rachmaninoff's exact rank as a composer, it was his achievement to reflect his own world—simply, honestly, and directly."[2] Far more typical was the outright contempt of the American composer Walter Piston, who once confronted Gary Graffman after a performance of the Second Piano Concerto, asking, "How can you play such junk?" Similar sentiments can be found in the article about Rachmaninoff in the 1954 edition of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*:

> As a composer he can hardly be said to have belonged to his time at all. His music is well constructed and effective, but monotonous in texture, which consists in essence mainly of artificial and gushing tunes accompanied by a variety of figures derived from arpeggios. The enormous popular success some few of Rachmaninoff's works had in his lifetime is not likely to last, and musicians never regarded it with much favor.

To read this sniffy passage today is to be reminded of a remark made by Percy Grainger: "The world around me is dying of 'good taste.'" But tastes change, and it turns out that Rachmaninoff's "enormous popular success" has lasted. Moreover, a growing number of musicians and critics now freely admit to holding his music in high esteem. Earlier this season, for example, New York City's Lincoln Center presented a "Rachmaninoff Revisited" festival in which such artists as the Russian pianist-conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy and the British pianist Stephen Hough performed most of his major works. And while much postwar Rachmaninoff scholarship remains available only in Russian—there is still no full-length critical biography in English—two important books about his life and work were reissued in paperback last year by leading academic publishers.[3]

TERRY TEACHOUT *is the music critic of* COMMENTARY *and a contributor to* Time *magazine. He is the author of* The Skeptic: A Life of H. L. Mencken, *forthcoming in November from HarperCollins.*

[1] Rachmaninoff preferred this transliteration of his name from the original Cyrillic characters, and used it consistently from 1917 on.

[2] "In Praise of Rachmaninoff," May 1978.

[3] They are *Sergei Rachmaninoff: A Lifetime in Music*, a 1956 documentary biography by Sergei Bertensson and Jay Leyda (Indiana, 464 pp., $29.95, paper), and a revised edition of *Rachmaninoff*, Geoffrey Norris's volume in the Master Musicians series (Oxford, 196 pp., $16.95, paper).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Even *Grove's* finally got around to changing its mind, commissioning a new article for its 1980 edition in which Rachmaninoff is described as "the last great representative of Russian late romanticism."

This is true enough, so far as it goes. But had Rachmaninoff's contemporaries listened more attentively to his music, particularly the pieces he wrote after emigrating to the West in 1917, they might have seen that despite his nostalgia for the lost world of Czarist Russia, the last great Russian romantic also heard—and heeded—the call of modernity.

SERGEI VASILYEVICH Rachmaninoff was the second son of a charming but irresponsible aristocrat who had money, married more money, and lost it all. Within a few years of Sergei's birth in 1873, the Rachmaninoffs were forced to sell their ancestral estates and move to a small apartment in St. Petersburg. Vasily Rachmaninoff and his wife Lyubov soon separated, informally but permanently, and young Sergei knew from then on that he would have to make his own way in the world.

After a false start at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, the boy left his family in 1885, transferred to the Moscow Conservatory, and began working in earnest. Three years later, Tchaikovsky heard his music and predicted "a great future" for him; not long after that, he moved in with Varvara Satina, his father's still-wealthy sister. Until he left Russia, Rachmaninoff would spend his summers at Ivanovka, the Satin family's country home, where he did most of his composing. He was inspired by the beauty of the place, as well as by the love of a surrogate family that gave him some of the stability heretofore missing from his uncertain life. As he would later recall:

> Ivanovka offered the repose of surrounding that hard work requires—at least, for me. This steppe was like an infinite sea where the waters are actually boundless fields of wheat, rye, oats, stretching from horizon to horizon. Sea air is often praised, but how much more do I love the air of the steppe, with its aroma of earth and all that grows and blossoms—and there's no rolling boat under you, either.

Eventually, Rachmaninoff would marry Natalya Satina, his first cousin, and become master of the estate that was now his true home. By then, though, he had long since established himself as a key figure in Russian music. In 1891, he finished his first important work, the Piano Concerto No. 1 in F-Sharp Minor, Op. 1; he graduated from the Moscow Conservatory the following year, and within months had found a publisher, set up shop as a professional composer, and brought out a set of five short piano pieces, one of which would make him famous. The tightly interlocked chords of the Prelude in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 3, No. 2, evoke the sound of tolling church bells—an onomatopoeic device of which he would thereafter make frequent use.

Rachmaninoff was one of the very small number of classical musicians to have been equally gifted as composer, pianist, and conductor. Like the comparably multitalented Leonard Bernstein, he found it difficult to keep his three lives in balance, and tended to emphasize one "career" at a time; in Russia, he alternated between conducting and playing piano, whereas in the West he was primarily known as a pianist. Still, it was his compositions that brought him the widest acclaim, though even in Russia he occasionally ran afoul of highbrow critics who, like Vyacheslav Karatygin, claimed that "[t]he public worships Rachmaninoff because he has hit the center of average philistine musical taste."

The essential elements of Rachmaninoff's style were already firmly in place by the time he graduated from the Moscow Conservatory. Then and later, Tchaikovsky was his strongest influence, though he had a darker orchestral palette than his mentor, favoring the lower strings where Tchaikovsky's scoring is aerated by bright woodwind lines. Similarly, his piano writing is full of thick-voiced chords that cannot be executed comfortably by players with small hands, though it also contains numerous passages of Chopin-like delicacy.[4]

A lifelong depressive, Rachmaninoff readily admitted to being desperately afraid of death, an obsession presumably related to the unstable circumstances into which he was born, and his melancholy temperament left its mark on his music. Most of his compositions—including all three of his symphonies and all five works for piano and orchestra—are in minor keys. The *Dies Irae*, the familiar plainchant setting of the section in the Roman Catholic requiem mass that refers to the day of wrath that will "dissolve the world into ashes," is quoted prominently in several of his works, including *The Isle of the Dead*, Op. 29 (1907), the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43 (1934), and the Symphonic Dances, Op. 45 (1940). In addition, some of his best-known original melodies, among them the opening themes of the Piano Concerto No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 18 (1900-01) and the Piano Concerto No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 30 (1909), have the flavor of Russian Orthodox liturgical chant.

LIKE MANY other Franco-Russian composers, Rachmaninoff did not take naturally to the sonata-allegro form that had dominated Austro-German musical tradition. Unsure

[4] It is possible that Rachmaninoff suffered from Marfan's syndrome, a hereditary disorder of the connective tissues that would not only explain the unusually large size of his hands (he could play a chord spanning an octave and a half with his left hand) but might also account for some of the painful ailments that beset him throughout his adult life, including arthritis, chronic back pain, and occasional stiffness of the hands.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of his ability to sustain an organically developed musical argument, he cut and revised many of his longer pieces prior to their final publication, and sometimes even after that. Significantly, he admitted to finding it "of great help," when composing, "to have in mind a book just recently read, or a beautiful picture, or a poem. Sometimes a definite story is kept in mind, which I try to convert into tones without disclosing the source of my inspiration."[5]

Not surprisingly, then, he was more at home with character pieces for solo piano, which require less rigorous formal control, and with songs and choral music, whose structure mirrors the sequence and imagery of a pre-existing verbal text. While he also produced a few successful large-scale instrumental works during his Russian years, most notably the Second and Third Piano Concertos and the Symphony No. 2 in E Minor, Op. 27 (1906-7), more characteristic—and arguably more effective—is *The Isle of the Dead*, a Liszt-like symphonic poem inspired by Arnold Böcklin's macabre painting of the same name.

This lack of formal rigor was off-putting to German-trained critics, who habitually condescended to Rachmaninoff without betraying the slightest appreciation of his gift for writing the long-breathed, immediately memorable tunes that are now known the world over as his trademark. Amazingly, the writer Philip Hale rendered the following wrong-headed judgment on the Second Concerto in a program note for the Boston Symphony's first performance of that now-beloved piece: "The first movement is labored and has little marked character. It might have been written by any German, technically well trained, who was acquainted with the music of Tchaikovsky."

As he grew older, Rachmaninoff lightened his palette, producing songs whose vaporous keyboard textures and elaborately chromatic harmonies are almost impressionistic in effect. At the same time, his rhythmic language became more unpredictable, even aggressive; the Russian pianist Sviatoslav Richter would later go so far as to claim that the Etudes-Tableaux, Opp. 33 and 39 (1911-16) foreshadowed the modernist keyboard techniques of Sergei Prokofiev. Still, these changes took place within the framework of an already well-defined style, and though the Etudes-Tableaux are more musically sophisticated than Rachmaninoff's earlier pieces, they are no less clearly the work of the composer of the C-Sharp Minor Prelude.

Rachmaninoff's stylistic growth was interrupted by the Russian Revolution, a disaster about whose implications he had no doubt whatsoever. At the end of 1917, the composer and his family left Russia, never to return. Fourteen years later, he would co-sign a letter to the *New York Times* declaring that "[a]t no time, and in no country, has there ever existed a government responsible for so many cruelties, wholesale murders, and common-law crimes in general as those perpetrated by the Bolsheviki."

No sooner had he settled in the U.S. than Rachmaninoff realized he would no longer be able to earn a living as a composer: Russia had never ratified international copyright conventions, thus making it impossible for him to profit from the continuing sale of his most popular works. Igor Stravinsky faced a similar problem when he emigrated from the Soviet Union, and both men came up with the same solution, retrofitting themselves as high-priced celebrity performers. Rachmaninoff briefly considered a career as a conductor (the Boston Symphony even offered to make him its music director), but opted instead to become a full-time concert pianist, playing his own concertos with symphony orchestras and giving numerous solo recitals that established him as one of the half-dozen greatest piano virtuosos of the 20th century.

Rachmaninoff recorded extensively between 1919 and 1942, making it possible for later generations to hear the playing that W. J. Henderson described in his review of a 1929 performance of the Chopin B-Flat Minor Sonata:

> The logic of the thing was impervious; the plan was invulnerable; the proclamation was imperial. There was nothing left for us but to thank our stars that we had lived when Rachmaninoff did and heard him, out of the divine might of his genius, re-create a masterpiece. It was a day of genius understanding genius.

But while Rachmaninoff's 78's continue to be admired by connoisseurs, the impression they make on modern-day listeners is quite different from that which they made when new.[6] Today, Rachmaninoff is seen as the quintessential romantic, imperiously high-handed in his free treatment of the printed text; but in his own time he was thought to be (in the phrase of the American critic-composer H. T. Parker) "the puritan of pianists," austere and direct to the point of matter-of-factness. In fact, both points of view are valid. For all the flexibility he brought to the music of Chopin and Schumann, it is Rachmaninoff's galvanizing rhythmic exactitude that gives his playing the distinctively "modern" quality noted by his contemporaries.

Unfortunately, his grueling concert schedule, including the im-

[5] On a few occasions, Rachmaninoff acknowledged the specific extramusical source of a purely instrumental composition. In 1930, for instance, he told the Italian composer Ottorino Respighi that the Etude-Tableau in A Minor, Op. 39/6, was based on the story of Little Red Riding Hood.

[6] Rachmaninoff recorded the Chopin B-Flat Minor Sonata for Victor three days after giving the concert reviewed by Henderson. The performance is currently available on CD and is listed in the discography at the end of this essay, along with a sampling of his other recordings as pianist and conductor.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mense amount of practice time he needed in order to work up a sufficiently varied solo repertoire, made it all but impossible for him to concentrate on composing. Beyond this, the shock of leaving his native land—of losing Ivanovka, for him the embodiment of all things Russian—robbed him of inspiration. As a result, he wrote no original compositions of any kind between 1918 and 1925, and from 1926 until his death seventeen years later he produced only six pieces.

By the time Rachmaninoff once again felt capable of composing, he had become painfully aware that the world of classical music had changed beyond recognition. Czarist Russia had been more or less isolated from modernist developments in the West; but by 1926, the modern movement in music was firmly established in Europe and America, and Rachmaninoff claimed to find its values unsympathetic: "I feel like a ghost wandering in a world grown alien. I cannot cast out the old way of writing, and I cannot acquire the new. The new kind of music seems to come, not from the heart, but from the head. Its composers think rather than feel."

Yet for all his seeming rejection of modernism, the compositions of Rachmaninoff's later years suggest that he was not only aware of the new music but had even been influenced by it. In addition to being more compact and coherent in form than their predecessors, the Paganini Rhapsody, Symphonic Dances, and Symphony No. 3 in A Minor, Op. 44 (1936) are tough-minded, even sardonic in tone. Rhythmically edgy and harmonically acerbic, these romantic yet forward-looking pieces are the work of an artist who was fully prepared to engage with modernity—on his own terms. It is revealing that only the Paganini Rhapsody found ready acceptance in the concert hall, no doubt because it is a spectacular virtuoso showpiece, whereas the Third Symphony and Symphonic Dances left audiences cold.

Alas, Rachmaninoff wrote no more music after the Symphonic Dances, claiming that they were his "last flicker" of inspiration. Instead, he threw himself into concertizing, continuing to perform even after it became clear that he was seriously ill. In February of 1943, he canceled his remaining appearances and returned home to Los Angeles, where his doctors learned that what they had thought to be a severe case of pleurisy was in fact malignant melanoma, a particularly virulent form of cancer. He died a month later, and was buried in New York.

THE REHABILITATION of Rachmaninoff is one of the most curious chapters in the history of musical taste. For unlike so many apparently similar phenomena, it cannot be explained by the collapse of the avant-garde monopoly. Rather, Rachmaninoff's music was widely dismissed by tonal and atonal modernists alike, and it was only because of the unswerving loyalty of performers—and, of course, audiences—that he continued to be performed throughout the era of high modernism.

That so committed an exponent of the natural law of tonality should have inspired such widespread contempt even among those who shared his views can be partially explained by recourse to one of the fundamental tenets of modernism itself: the notion that cultural progress is historically inevitable. According to this view, it is possible to be a tradition-minded modernist, but only by working in an idiom that is unambiguously contemporary in flavor. Thus, Stravinsky was a conservative modernist who sought to reinterpret and refresh the language of functional tonality, whereas Rachmaninoff, though no less committed to tonality, was an antimodern reactionary who refused to change with the times.

This is, of course, a Marxist-style political interpretation of history disguised as an iron law of aesthetics. But while it may have some validity as a general proposition, it has no relevance to the particular case of Rachmaninoff. Not only was he a decade older than such first-generation modernists as Bartók, Berg, and Stravinsky, but—contrary to widespread belief—the works he produced after emigrating to the West were subtly but unmistakably shaped by modernism. And while it is impossible to know what kind of music he might have written had he lived longer, it seems not at all unlikely that his style would have continued to move along the challenging course set by the Paganini Rhapsody, Third Symphony, and Symphonic Dances.

Be that as it may, one need not speculate about what Rachmaninoff might have done in order to admire what he actually did. At the very least, his work is easily comparable in quality to that of such neoromantic modernists as Samuel Barber, Francis Poulenc, or William Walton, and the best of it grows in stature with repeated hearings. It has only been in recent years that Rachmaninoff has come to be acknowledged in the West as a first-class song composer, and the Etudes-Tableaux and Symphonic Dances now seem on their way to entering the standard repertoire.

What, then, was the matter with Rachmaninoff? For those listeners who are made uncomfortable by the straightforward expression of emotion in classical music, his name will always be a synonym for vulgarity. The English critic Edward Sackville-West, writing in 1924, spoke for them all:

> Metaphorically speaking, Rachmaninoff shut himself up in a dark room, frightened himself to death, and then translated his soul-storm into the language of music. I look forward to the time when people will be ashamed to listen to Scriabin, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, [Richard Strauss's] *Tod und Verklärung*, and the symphonies of Gustav Mahler.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But less priggish critics (one is tempted to say, less English critics) no longer find it necessary to make excuses for Sergei Rachmaninoff, not even for the ever-popular Second and Third Concertos. These frankly emotional, impeccably crafted pieces, like the rest of his output, have stood the test of time, and while some of his works are more fully realized than others, it is now plain to see why the best of them have won—and earned—a permanent place in the hearts of listeners everywhere.

Rachmaninoff on CD: A Select Discography

Sergei Rachmaninoff made superb recordings of many of his major compositions, both as pianist and as conductor. They include the four piano concertos and Paganini Rhapsody (Naxos 8.110601 and 8.110602) and the Third Symphony, *Vocalise*, and *Isle of the Dead* (RCA Victor Gold Seal 09026-62532-2), all with the Philadelphia Orchestra, led in the concerted works by Eugene Ormandy and Leopold Stokowski.

In addition, countless other distinguished artists have recorded Rachmaninoff's music, and most of their performances are currently available on CD.[7] Here are some of the best, arranged chronologically by date of recording:

1920-21: Among the first pieces by Rachmaninoff to be recorded by other artists were four of his songs, "In the Silence of the Secret Night," Op. 4/3 (1892), "Sing Not to Me, Beautiful Maiden," Op. 4/4 (1893), "To the Children," Op. 26/7 (1906), and "Before My Window," Op. 26/10 (1906), sung in English by the lyric tenor John McCormack with violin obbligati by Fritz Kreisler. All are on *John McCormack, Lieder Singer*, an anthology of McCormack's fascinatingly idiosyncratic recordings of German and Russian art songs (Symposium 1164).

1937-43: The cultivated, warm-toned pianism of Benno Moiseiwitsch, whom Rachmaninoff called his "artistic heir," can be heard on *The Complete Rachmaninov Recordings: 1937-43*, which contains the Second Concerto, the Paganini Rhapsody, and seven solos. Among the latter are Moiseiwitsch's staggering 1939 version of Rachmaninoff's transcription for solo piano of the Mendelssohn *Midsummer Night's Dream* scherzo, recorded in a single unrehearsed take (Appian APR 5505).

1950-51: The death of William Kapell in a 1953 plane crash brought to a premature end what would surely have been the most illustrious career of any American pianist of the 20th century. Fortunately, Kapell left behind incomparably forceful and vital recordings of Rachmaninoff's Second Concerto and Paganini Rhapsody, and both are included in the Kapell volume of Philips's *Great Pianists of the 20th Century* series (Philips 456 853-2, two CD's).

1951: Vladimir Horowitz, whose playing of the Third Concerto Rachmaninoff preferred to his own, made three "official" recordings of that notoriously demanding piece. The second, accompanied by Fritz Reiner and a New York studio orchestra, is a locus classicus of the pianist's febrile style (RCA Victor Gold Seal 7754-2-RG).

1957: Six years later, Reiner and the Chicago Symphony recorded a taut, brilliantly played early-stereo performance of *The Isle of the Dead*. It has been reissued on CD as part of *The Reiner Sound*, an anthology of orchestral showpieces (RCA Victor Living Stereo 09026-61250-2).

1958: Van Cliburn recorded the Third Concerto live at Carnegie Hall shortly after winning the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow. Unlike the composer's own heavily cut recording, this lyrical yet commanding performance, accompanied by Kiril Kondrashin and the Symphony of the Air, is unabridged. It is part of the Cliburn volume in the *Great Pianists of the 20th Century* series, coupled with the Piano Sonata No. 2 in B-Flat Minor, Op. 36 (1913) and eight shorter solos (Philips 456 748-2, two CD's).

1959-67: Rachmaninoff worked closely with the Philadelphia Orchestra in his later years, dedicating his Symphonic Dances to that lush-sounding ensemble. Eugene Ormandy, Stokowski's successor as music director, went on to make definitive stereo recordings with the orchestra of the Symphonic Dances (Sony Classical SBK 48279) and the three symphonies (Sony Classical SB2K 63257, two CD's).

1971-83: The Russian pianist Sviatoslav Richter's album of selections from the Preludes, Opp. 23 and 32, and Etudes-Tableaux, Opp. 33 and 39 is among the greatest of all Rachmaninoff recordings, past or present (Olympia OCD 337).

1974-79: The Swedish soprano Elisabeth Söderström recorded a

[7] Out of print but worth looking for are Alexis Weissenberg's 1970 set of the piano preludes, a version much admired by Herbert von Karajan (and available as recently as last year as RCA Victor Gold Seal 60568-2-RG), and a collection of seventeen of Rachmaninoff's best-known songs, gorgeously sung by the tenor Nicolai Gedda and accompanied by Weissenberg with sometimes excessive but always startling virtuosity (briefly available in France as EMI Studio D 102573).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

near-complete set of Rachmaninoff's songs with Vladimir Ashkenazy at the piano, and these sensitive performances have been deservedly acclaimed ever since their original release (Decca/London 436 920-2, three CD's).

1993: An unusually theatrical interpretation of the *All-Night Vigil*, Op. 37 (1915), a liturgical setting for unaccompanied chorus of a Russian Orthodox service, was recorded by Nikolai Korniev and the St. Petersburg Chamber Choir, with Olga Borodina singing the mezzo-soprano solos (Philips 442 344-2).

1999: David Finckel, the cellist of the Emerson String Quartet, also makes CD's with his wife, the pianist Wu Han. Among their best performances, which can be ordered directly through www.artistled.com, is a lustrous version of the Cello Sonata in G Minor, Op. 19 (1901), appropriately coupled with sonatas by Prokofiev and Shostakovich (ArtistLed 19901-2).

2000: Rachmaninoff's favorite among his own works was *The Bells*, Op. 35, a 1913 "choral symphony" for soprano, tenor, baritone, chorus, and orchestra based on Edgar Allan Poe's famous verses, which had previously been translated into Russian by the symbolist poet Konstantin Balmont. It is now available in an idiomatic performance by the Moscow State Chamber Choir and the Russian National Orchestra, conducted by Mikhail Pletnev (DGG 289 471 029-2).

In addition, a representative selection of Rachmaninoff's solo 78's, including nineteen of his own shorter pieces and his legendary interpretations of Chopin's B-Flat-Minor Sonata and Schumann's *Carnaval*, can be heard on the Rachmaninoff volume in the *Great Pianists of the 20th Century* series (Philips 456 943-2, two CD's).

Except as indicated, these CD's can all be purchased online by viewing this article during the month of June on COMMENTARY's website: www.commentarymagazine.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books in Review

Righteous Anger

Why We Fight:
Moral Clarity and the
War on Terrorism
by William J. Bennett
Doubleday. 175 pp. $19.95

Reviewed by
David Pryce-Jones

BEFORE SEPTEMBER 11, it is safe to say, very few people in the Western world had grasped the fact that there were Muslims with a rage in them so overwhelming that they were prepared to kill several thousand Americans just because they were American. Although Americans may have been aware that Ayatollah Khomeini and his supporters in Iran considered their country "the Great Satan," surely that phrase was a metaphor, if not whimsy. It was therefore as unexpected as it was shocking when Osama bin Laden, the Saudi millionaire and mastermind of the September 11 attack, glorified mass murder as God's work.

The rage and the hate did not arise out of nowhere, however. Rather, they were and are components of the encounter between Islam and the West. That encounter has been most unequal. The choice facing Muslims, as it appeared to anyone who thought about the matter in the last hundred years, has been either to remodel their societies on Western lines or to risk dropping out of history altogether. Secular Muslim leaders and rebels made their choice; calling themselves nationalists, they duly set about modernizing. With the notable exception of Ataturk in Turkey, these experiments were social and political failures. Muslim countries became despotisms rather than democracies, independent but not free. Militarizing their people, nationalist leaders brutalized and robbed those they claimed to represent, leaving the encounter between Islam and the West as unequal as ever, and generating among Muslims a widespread and unbearable sense of humiliation.

There were always Muslim leaders or rebels who tried to mobilize against the West in the name of Islam itself, and all the more intensely in the light of the social and political catastrophes wrought by nationalist rulers. Revolutionary movements and groups have sprung up in Muslim countries, some overt and popular, others clandestine, all generically known as Islamist. Their logic is simple: Westerners and their society are not to be imitated but to be rejected wholesale.

Islamists treat their religion as the effective means for bringing the long and unequal encounter with the West to its rightful conclusion—in Muslim supremacy. Notwithstanding doctrinal and other differences among themselves, Islamists have managed to capture the general Muslim imagination quite widely. September 11 was greeted with dancing in the streets in many Arab cities. Some of these crowds were secular and nationalist in outlook, others were Islamist. One and all shared the joy of striking back at last at what was perceived to be an overbearing enemy.

WHAT IS the proper response to all this? To William J. Bennett, Sep-

DAVID PRYCE-JONES, *the British political analyst, is a senior editor of* National Review.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tember 11 was an outrage with which there can be no compromise, and those who declared war upon us have to be answered with war. In this short but extremely valuable book, the distinguished former Secretary of Education, who has recently founded a new organization called Americans for Victory over Terrorism, brings his customary lucidity and polemical firepower to bear both on the attack itself and on what he sees as the feeble and compromised response to that attack by American elites.

Bennett takes bin Laden and the Islamists at face value. To them, clearly, the destruction of America is no metaphor, and thus there is little point in asking whether they form the majority of Muslims or a minority with a triumphalist claim. It is enough to know that they believe terror to be God's work, and are promising to continue it by any means available. As for the relationship between the murderous fanaticism of Islamists and the core doctrines of Islam proper, Bennett points out that Islamic religious authorities up to the highest levels have justified terror, and, with few exceptions, spokesmen of official Muslim organizations have apologized for it. In the United States itself, strenuous efforts to accommodate Muslims as citizens have had only mixed effects: many young Muslim-Americans are being taught to remain culturally alienated from if not plainly antagonistic toward their new home; with some horror Bennett quotes one who says, "Being an American means nothing to me."

The United States is not alone among nations in being the object of Islamist and/or Arab hatred. In a separate and especially eloquent and timely chapter, Bennett extends his analysis to Israel and its parallel fight against Palestinian terror. On the issue of Israel, nationalist and Islamist ideology fuse. Murderous anti-Semitism, Bennett writes accurately, is now "constant and central" in the Arab world. It is also spreading far and wide, as most blatantly shown last August at the United Nations Conference Against Racism in Durban, "an orchestrated carnival of anti-Israel and anti-American hatred."

Nor is the linkage between Israel and the United States an accident. Just as the two countries' common enemies feed each other's contempt for democracy and taste for absolutism and violence, so, on the other side, Israel and the United States share what Bennett calls "linked destinies." Until such time as the Arabs cease their terror and make peace, Israel is under a moral duty to defend itself that is every bit as stringent as America's. What is at stake, Bennett holds, is nothing less than the survival of liberty.

THE GRAVITY of the stakes is precisely why Bennett so admires the grief and anger that were immediately and spontaneously expressed throughout the United States after September 11—signs, in his judgment, of everything that is "instinctually grand about the American national character," and embodied perfectly by President Bush in his promise to root out terror and its sponsors everywhere. For here was one of those rare moments of moral clarity that unify a nation and determine its course of action.

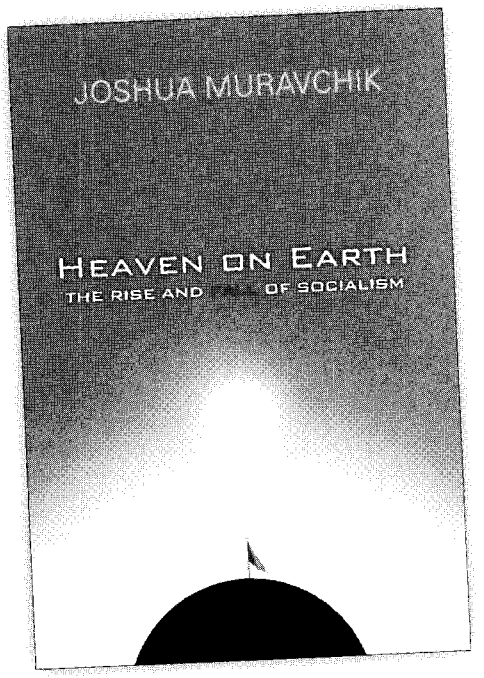
As far as Bennett is concerned, the positive qualities of America speak for themselves. Yes, the historical record is "spotted"—most egregiously by slavery—but the means of self-correction have rarely failed. In broad terms, moreover, the United States has provided an unprecedented degree of freedom and equality and justice for its own people, and has been instrumental in spreading those blessings widely to others. "Our open, tolerant, prosperous, peaceable society," Bennett writes, "is the marvel and envy of the ages." In the aftermath of September 11, the Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi caused a scandal when he asserted that the democratic West was superior to an Islamic absolutism that shows no respect for religious, political, or any other freedom. Bennett agrees, and does not hesitate to add that, in the face of Islamism and the war it is pursuing, American patriotism is a human duty, and righteous anger entirely moral.

But there is a catch. For, just at the testing moment, when America has to muster its inner resources in self-defense, a "peace party" has been forming that threatens to sap the country's resolve. The people involved are the usual culprits of the Left, and much of this book's real energy goes toward identifying and tackling a ragbag of disaffected activists and intellectuals: exhibitionistic professors, feminists, moral relativists and nonjudgmentalists, aging 60's radicals, those who follow chic French philosophers in maintaining that objective truth is a chimera, historical revisionists, professional victimologists, and third-world liberationists. Bennett has high fun with some of the more outré sayings of Professors Eric Foner, Stanley Fish, Fredric Jameson, and Michael Rogin, the posturings of a Katha Pollitt who refused to allow her daughter to fly the flag, the maunderings of a Barbara Kingsolver who finds the American language of patriotism "'inseparable from a battle cry,'" and many others.

Ostensibly, the purpose of the "peace party" is to raise a serious moral objection to the use of force in pursuit of the national interest. To illustrate how far this attitude has penetrated, Bennett quotes an eleven-year-old schoolboy: "We learned that you should always find a peaceful way to solve your problems because you should never be violent." (In much the same spirit, Madeleine Albright comically redefined rogue states as "states of concern.") But what looks to its proponents like moral delicacy is, in Bennett's eyes, only moral idiocy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HEAVEN ON EARTH
THE RISE AND FALL OF SOCIALISM
Joshua Muravchik



ISBN: 1-893554-45-7, 344 pages, $27.95

"Joshua Muravchik has written an illuminating history that traces the great and not-so-great individuals who made socialism happen."
–Wall Street Journal

"Muravchik ranges confidently through history of socialism, neatly weaving biography, anecdote, and political commentary into a fascinating chronicle of disappointed idealism."
–The New Criterion

"This is an important work and an object lesson showing great harm is frequently done by those with the purest motives."
–Booklist

"Strikingly well-written. The radicalism of the nineteenth century, it turns out, is merely the prologue to our own time and the place to begin in understanding that is with Joshua Muravchik's compelling account of the history of socialism."
–Weekly Standard

In **Heaven on Earth**, Joshua Muravchik tells the story of socialism's rise and fall through portraits of dreamers and doers such as French revolutionary Gracchus Babeuf, whose "Conspiracy of Equals" was the first movement to try to outlaw private property; Robert Owen, who hoped to plant a model socialist utopia in the United States; Friedrich Engels, creator of the cult of Karl Marx and "scientific" socialism; Benito Mussolini, self proclaimed socialist heretic and inventor of Fascism; Clement Attlee, who rejected the fanatics and set out to build socialism democratically in Britain; Julius Nyerere, who merged social democracy and communism in the hope of making Tanzania a model for the developing world; and Mikhail Gorbachev, Deng Xiaoping and Tony Blair, who became socialism's inadvertent undertakers. Filled with character and event, Muravchik's narrative gives us an epic chronicle of a movement that tried to turn the world upside down—and for a time succeeded.

ENCOUNTER BOOKS
At bookstores everywhere or call 800-786-3839 www.encounterbooks.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Not merely an expression of philosophical pacifism, the refusal to feel righteous anger in response to September 11 stems, he argues, from a standing hostility to America and all its works.

So extreme is this hostility that most of those in the "peace party" accept unconditionally the proposition that America is a racist, warmongering, imperialist, or even fascist state, by definition so criminal that it has brought a deserved attack upon its own head. Their credo, in sum, is that the United States and its foreign and domestic policies are to blame for what Islamists do. Here is a masochistic internalization of the very worst accusations leveled by foreign enemies—and, ironically, a supreme act of condescension, in which Islamists themselves are relegated to a passive role, like children without full responsibility for their actions.

As individuals, those who comprise the "peace party" may be of less than shattering importance, and hence unworthy of Bennett's or anyone else's indignation. But on account of their high visibility, they attract a great deal of attention; many of them occupy positions of cultural influence or, as professors and teachers, are able to falsify the lessons of history for today's and tomorrow's students. The present, moreover, is what Marx called "a plastic hour." Things can turn out in several different ways. President Bush's mood of resolution may not be what it was after September 11. American policy toward Iraq and Iran has sometimes seemed to dissolve in consultation with allies anxious to do nothing more than wring their hands. Israel's war on terror has elicited contradictory responses in Washington.

Have circumstances changed, and will the "axis of evil" become merely a phrase remembered from a war that should have been fought but never was? The brightness of a brief moment of moral clarity would then fade into confusion, and the "peace party" would claim a victory. William Bennett has done his very best to warn that such an eventuality would mark, instead, a terrible and lasting defeat.

That Which Sustains Us

The Orchards of Syon
by Geoffrey Hill
Counterpoint. 77 pp. $24.00

Reviewed by
Thomas L. Jeffers

LITERARY CRITICS refer to the late 20th century as the age of the postmodern. As a glance at any standard handbook reveals, the term is virtually meaningless—a graceless cover for the manifold projects that came after literary modernism, which was itself pretty manifold. What one might minimally say, however, is that postmodern writers use the idiom of our day, and refer as readily to mass culture as to the anthologized canon.

By that or any other definition, Geoffrey Hill is a major postmodern poet. Born in 1932 in Worcestershire, England, the only child of a policeman and his wife, he was educated at Oxford, published his first volume at twenty, and went on to teach at Leeds, Cambridge, and now (having moved to the U.S.) Boston University.

Since his first three volumes were collected in 1975 as *Somewhere Is Such a Kingdom*, Hill has enjoyed the praise of formidable critics (notably Harold Bloom), and has been placed in the company of such figures as Seamus Heaney and John Ashbery. Much more than they, however, he has seriously philosophical ambitions—in the sense that he consciously articulates a thought-out view of the world. If in his racy, eclectic language and in his wide range of reference he is plainly postmodern, in his themes he evokes comparison with the great modernists W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, and Wallace Stevens.

In the last few years, after a long hiatus beginning in 1983 (when he brought out *The Mystery of Charity in Charles Péguy*), Hill has been amazingly productive. First came *Canaan* (1997), followed by *The Triumph of Love* (1998), *Speech! Speech!* (2000), and now *The Orchards of Syon*. The increment in the number of pages produced has been accompanied by a loosening of poetic structure, as the taut, metrically regular, frequently rhymed stanzas of Hill's early, strictly disciplined verse has given way to lines of four or five stresses, more open forms, and a very ragged right-hand margin.

As for the stuff of these recent poems, it may initially remind one of the jot-down-everything method of Robert Lowell's late sonnets, uneven drippings from a tap the poet could not shut off. In Hill's case, this inability to shut off the tap may have something to do with the fact that, as he told a *Paris Review* interviewer in 1999, he has been taking Prozac:

> From late childhood I suffered from chronic depression, which was accompanied by various exhausting obsessive-compulsive phobias. Totally undiagnosed, of course. I now see that the kind of perfectionism at which I was aiming in [my] earlier books was, so to speak, the acceptable face of this obsessive-compulsive disorder.

To which one might respond that there is nothing wrong with a poem's being technically "perfect," and that in his early, undiagnosed state, Hill wrote a fair number of such poems. Here, for example, is

---

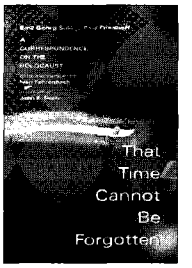
THOMAS L. JEFFERS, *a new contributor, teaches English literature at Marquette University and has recently finished a book about the Bildungsroman from Goethe to Santayana.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Now available at Indiana!

"THAT TIME CANNOT BE FORGOTTEN"

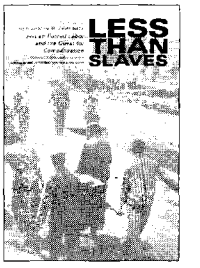
A Correspondence on the Holocaust
Emil Georg Sold and Paul Friedhoff
Edited and Translated by Ivan Fehrenbach
Afterword by John K. Roth
Two men struggle with the unanswerable in this contemporary correspondence about the Holocaust.
cloth $29.95



Now back in print!

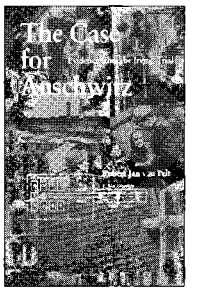
LESS THAN SLAVES

Jewish Forced Labor and the Quest for Compensation
Benjamin B. Ferencz
Foreword by General Telford Taylor
"This short book is of extreme importance. . . . [It] is a book to ponder."
—Martin Gilbert, *The New York Times*
Published in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
cloth $39.95 paper $19.95



THE CASE FOR AUSCHWITZ

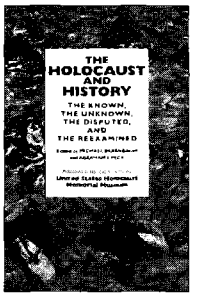
Evidence from the Irving Trial
Robert Jan van Pelt
A Selection of Traditions Jewish Book Club
"The bulk of the book is the methodical and chilling presentation of materials presented at the trial . . . interwoven with Irving's testimony and defense. Van Pelt has arranged an enormous amount of complex material succinctly and to great effect. Read as a whole, the book is a stunning courtroom drama and a vital document of historical evidence. This is an important addition to Holocaust literature and 20th-century history."—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)
cloth $45.00



Now in paperback!

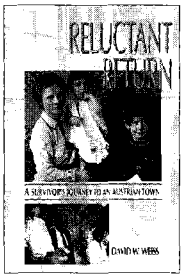
THE HOLOCAUST AND HISTORY

The Known, the Unknown, the Disputed, and the Reexamined
Edited by Michael Berenbaum and Abraham J. Peck
A Selection of the Jewish Book Club
". . . magnificent . . . surely among [the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's] greatest achievements to date. . . . The range of the essays is nothing short of breathtaking." —*Jerusalem Post*
Published in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
cloth $65.00 paper $35.00



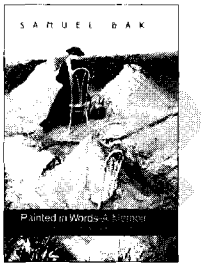
RELUCTANT RETURN

A Survivor's Journey to an Austrian Town
David W. Weiss
A Selection of The Reader's Subscription
"In an astonishing and moving document, Weiss . . . describes his 1995 return trip to the Austrian hometown from which, as a boy, he fled Nazi persecution in 1938. . . . [T]his soul-searching odyssey . . . will reward readers of all faiths."—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)
Jewish Literature and Culture
Published with the sponsorship of J. William and Frances B. Julian
cloth $20.00



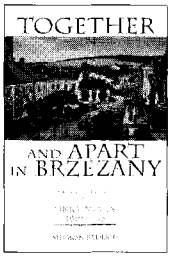
PAINTED IN WORDS

A Memoir
Samuel Bak
Foreword by Amos Oz
The spirited autobiography of a distinguished artist whose life and art were shaped by the Holocaust experiences of his childhood in the Vilna ghetto.
Distributed for Pucker Art Publications, Boston
cloth $40.00



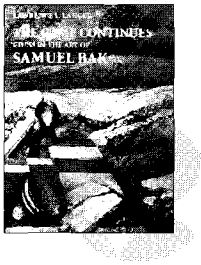
TOGETHER AND APART IN BRZEZANY

Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians, 1919–1945
Shimon Redlich
"Professor Redlich has made a remarkable effort to transcend narrow ethnic perspectives in telling this sad and shocking story . . . This is a moving and impressive book. . . . Its significance extends far beyond the context of local or regional history."—Antony Polonsky
cloth $29.95



THE GAME CONTINUES

Chess in the Art of Samuel Bak
Lawrence L. Langer
Internationally prominent Holocaust artist depicts a destroyed world through the metaphor of chess.
Distributed for Pucker Art Publications, Boston
cloth $39.95



As seen on "Now with Bill Moyers"

A HISTORY OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Mark Tessler
"This is the best book on the subject at present. Highly recommended." —*Library Journal* (starred review)
"A dense, well-annotated portrait of Jewish and Arab histories, national aspirations, and conflicts, focusing on the origins of modern Zionism and Arab nationalism with a view to the prospects for Israeli-Palestinian peace."—*Kirkus Reviews*
Indiana Series in Arab and Islamic Studies
paper $29.95

FEMALE, JEWISH, AND EDUCATED

The Lives of Central European University Women
Harriet Pass Freidenreich
Profiles Jewish women who studied at Central European universities in the four decades before World War II.
Modern Jewish Experience
Published with the generous support of the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation
cloth $34.95

at bookstores
Orders: 1-800-842-6796 • iupress.indiana.edu

INDIANA University Press

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the exquisite short elegy, "In Memory of Jane Fraser," from 1959:

When snow like sheep lay in
the fold
And winds went begging at
each door,
And the far hills were blue with
cold,
And a cold shroud lay on the moor,

She kept the siege. And every day
We watched her brooding
over death
Like a strong bird above its prey.
The room filled with the kettle's
breath.

Damp curtains glued against the
pane
Sealed time away. Her body froze
As if to freeze us all, and chain
Creation to a stunned repose.

She died before the world
could stir.
In March the ice unloosed the
brook
And water ruffled the sun's hair.
Dead cones upon the alder
shook.

No one is likely to dismiss this austere vision of a person's death, at one with the winter-death of moor and brook, as a product of obsessive-compulsive disorder. Nor is the austerity utterly bleak or pitiless or "depressed": what the dead cones shake out, after all, are seeds for new alders. But move forward three decades, and one can certainly agree that the philosophically serious matter of Hill's thought is often "imperfectly" contained—as in this, chosen almost at random from *The Orchards of Syon* (a title having less to do with Syon Park, the London home of the Duke of Northumberland and famous for its 18th-century gardens, than with a visionary place named for the Mount Zion that overlooks Jerusalem):

Here's late Schnittke now, auditor
pro defunctis and all-present,
resuscitating
organum. To summon from
drone-tomb
commotions of calm. Slavonic
eardrums'
requiem aeternam I though his
Zion more
Prussian than Russian. *Penitential Psalms* on *dot edu*. Listen,
Beryozka, birchling, this is so far
true to my acclaim:
aleatoric light that remains unfinished,
as Schnittke and his music multiform,
struck off in mean unpropitious
time.
At the end it is a question of
stamina.

Indeed it is.

How to tackle this? First, I imagine, many of us would have to look up the Russian-born composer Alfred Schnittke (1934-98), known for his "polystylistic" idiom and championed by performers like Gidon Kremer and Mstislav Rostropovich; and Beryozka, literally "birchling," but perhaps also the Russian dance troupe of that name; and *Penitential Psalms*, which in the Vulgate Latin Bible are Psalms 6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129, and 142, so named by Cassiodorus, a 6th-century monk. The research required goes well beyond the *Oxford English Dictionary*, where I confess I had to go for "aleatoric" (which, deriving from the Latin word for dice player, in music or art means "involving random choice by performer"). But beyond the research, one also has to splice the incomplete sentences together with the complete ones—Hill often seems content to proffer notebook entries as fully achieved parts of poems—and to make an educated guess about, for example, what "aleatoric light . . . unfinished" has to do with Schnittke's "music multiform" and our "mean unpropitious time."

This sort of exercise is what the original readers of *The Waste Land* were taxed with. Eliot's lines usually had a music, his phrasing a heft, that made the exercise seem worth the effort, and with help from Eliot's own notes and published scholarly trots, the effort was eventually made easier. Scholars will do the spadework for Hill's poems, too. In the meantime, we can try on our own to enjoy what Yeats called "the fascination of what's difficult." And enjoy is the right word; alongside its several tossed-off or unrealized lyrics, *Orchards* offers many that can stand with the best of Hill's early volumes.

THE JACKET illustration for *Orchards* provides a useful clue. It is a 1915 ink-and-watercolor drawing done by D.H. Lawrence for *The Rainbow*, and it depicts the two realms of existence that are Lawrence's theme in that novel: in the foreground of the drawing we see the sane, organic, immemorial world of the farm; in the background, the blighted world of colliery and town, with an overarching rainbow promising the hope against hope of redemption.

In *Orchards*, the mythic realms are not two but three:

Vallombrosa, and deep other shade
and shadow places, valleys of
dwale-drunk sorrows;
Goldengrove, the shuttered
lantern of nature. Syon's orchards
festal, unchanging, through the
change of seasons,
burgeoning in that dream which
is called vision
and naming, and is for the centuries.

Vallombrosa, a name from Dante by way of Milton, means the valley of the shadow—of death in this case, since Hill is alluding both to Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and to Psalm 23, and "dwale" is deadly nightshade. This valley is roughly equivalent to Lawrence's colliery and town, only worse because anyone trying to escape on vacation gets caught in "coast-traffic snarled,/ snarling." Goldengrove, a name from Gerard Manley Hopkins's poem "Spring and Fall," is more or less parallel to Lawrence's farm and the green world beyond, "your landscape /of deep disquiet, calm in its forms." Finally, Syon's or-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LABYRINTH BOOKS

proudly announces its

SALE STARTS **FRIDAY MAY 17**

5TH ANNIVERSARY BOOK SALE

20% Off New Releases
Additional 20% Off Thousands of Remainders and Sale Books
Special Discounts on Quantity Purchases

Scholarly, Literary & Cultural Books

536 w. 112th Street bet. Broadway & Amsterdam NY,NY 212-865-1588

Changing China

China's Economic Challenge

Smashing the Iron Rice Bowl
Neil C. Hughes

"Invaluable. ... Shows how China's leaders are trying to move the socialist economy toward a modern enterprise system yet are still mired in hidebound autocratic values."
— David Gedalecia, College of Wooster

Cloth $58.95 / Paper $24.95

Chinese Political Culture, 1989–2000

Edited by **Shiping Hua**

"A timely and important contribution to an often misunderstood subject ... The most comprehensive study to date of Chinese political culture in the 1990s."
— Stanley Rosen, University of Southern California

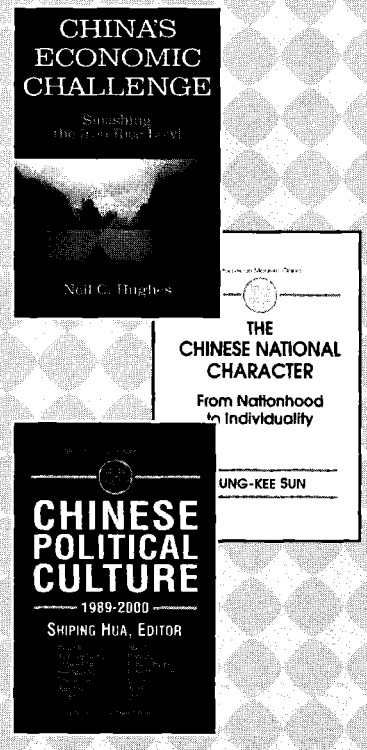
Cloth $68.95 / Paper $26.95

The Chinese National Character

From Nationhood to Individuality
Lung-kee Sun

"A thoroughly researched and footnoted study of 20th-century China's assessment of its own national character ... makes for fascinating reading."
— *Library Journal*

Cloth $65.95 / Paper $24.95



M.E. Sharpe PUBLISHER
TO ORDER: CALL (U.S.) 800-541-6563 • FAX 914-273-2106 • www.mesharpe.com AD215H

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

chards are the world as our imagination would *like* it to be—not wilderness, since orchards are after all planted and cultivated by farmers, but a sempiternal and ideal region of the mind where the trees are

sway-backed with pear and apple,
the plum, in spring and
autumn resplendent.
Syon! Syon! that which sustains us
and is
not the politics of envy, nor
solidarność,
a hard-won knowledge of what
wears us down.

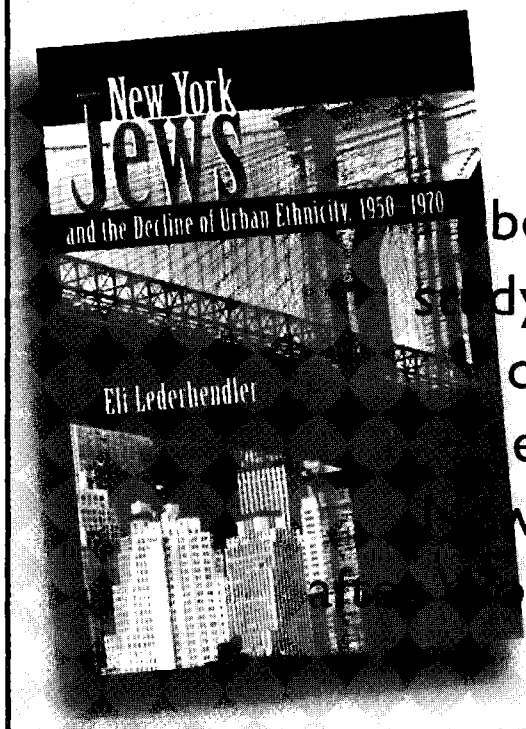
The Syon that Hill speaks of is, then, an object of contemplation or, in his phrase, "sensual intellectual" reflection, a form of "hard-won knowledge" that has no direct relation to group-think solidarity, especially the envy-driven politics of gender, race, or class, still the triune god of the academy. And the rainbow—"the great rainbow, as Bert / Lawrence saw it or summoned it"—is the symbol of that knowledge, the rainbow spanning

our midlands far and wide:
LAWRENCE, his
New Jerusalem *in the mind*
enthroned,
time for bestowal, shadow
into shadow,
St John the Baptist gloaming on
its hill.

THE RELIGIOUS allusions with which Hill's poems are strewn, along with his constant evocations of the Jesuit poet Hopkins, naturally raise the question of his own philosophical relation to the divine and the workings of the divine in our lives. It is a question he himself addresses head-on. Providence, he writes, "used to be worked-in, somewhere. I, at best,/conjecture divination." What he means is that the Age of Faith is over, and that "Dame Rainbow," as he calls her, is "Not as she once was, metaphysical" but at best a projection of the human imagination. For a post-Enlightenment seer like Hill, as for his acknowledged precursors Blake, Shelley, and Lawrence, one can only *intuit* God's providing for, or intervening in, our mundane affairs.

Hill, who was raised in the Anglican tradition, sang in church choirs well after graduating from Oxford, and has throughout his career written in awe of the Catholic martyrs under Elizabeth I, clearly wishes he had the certainty of a Hopkins, who possessed not only intuition but dogma. But "on the ground," as military planners like to say, how much does this matter? Hill is a late-romantic and a lapsed-but-longing Christian—that is, a Blakean who wishes he could be Dante. But what counts morally, with regard to our vision of a better life, is what we on earth

2002 KORET JEWISH BOOK AWARD WINNER



The first book-length study of Jewish culture and ethnicity in New York City after World War II.

Cloth $29.95 0-8156-0711-3

THE HOLOCAUST IN AMERICAN FILM *Second Edition*
Judith E. Doneson
"An admirable piece of scholarship balancing film analysis with historical research."—*Choice*
Paper $19.95s 0-8156-2926-5

JERUSALEM *A City and Its Future*
Edited by Marshall J. Breger and Ora Ahimeir
Addresses the politics of religion and ways of mediating the challenges of Jerusalem.
Paper $29.95s 0-8156-2913-3

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY PRESS
http://sumweb.syr.edu/su_press/ To order, call 1-800-365-8929

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

do to realize and (if we are poets) draw the lineaments of that better life:

> Period. Stop
> trying to amuse with such gleeful
> sorrow.
> Here are the Orchards of Syon,
> neither wisdom
> nor illusion of wisdom, not
> compensation, not recompense:
> the Orchards
> of Syon whatever harvests we
> bring them.

That is how this demanding volume ends. It is itself something like the orchards Hill spreads out for his readers' contemplation. Some of its trees have broken branches, others hardly produce, many are overgrafted with arcane allusions and weird punctuation, but no few are heavy with fruit, and, especially with repeated readings, one can find windfalls everywhere. As a philosophical poet, Hill may not be at the level of Yeats, Eliot, and Stevens (not to mention Goethe or Dante), and not just because he lacks their degree of systematic clarity. But he is perhaps the best our "mean unpropitious time" affords, and that is saying a lot.

The Expert

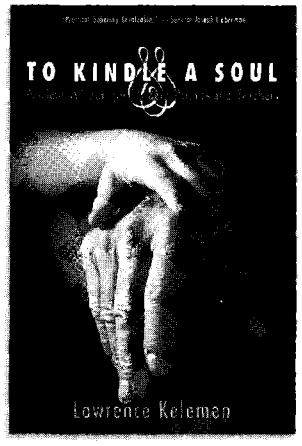
Unholy War:
Terror in the Name of Islam
by John L. Esposito
Oxford. 180 pp. $25.00

Reviewed by
Patrick Clawson

In the wake of September 11, few things have been more important to the United States than to understand why we were attacked. A variety of works seeking to explain

---

Patrick Clawson, *a new contributor, is the deputy director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.*

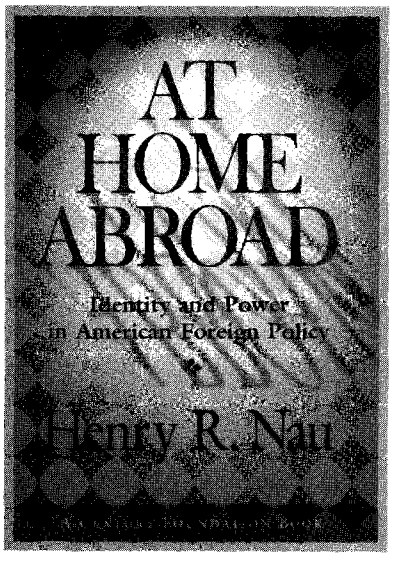


"*To Kindle a Soul* is quite simply a triumph. This book is a service to humanity. If all the world's parents read and adopted the lessons of this book, war would end by the next generation."

—Dennis Prager

Available at Bookstores Everywhere

Visit www.lawrencekelemen.com
A Targum/Leviathan Press Publication
To Order Call 1-800-538-4284



"The war on terrorism has made it increasingly clear that the United States must rethink its long-term strategy in international affairs. Henry Nau makes an admirable start here, arguing that an America strong and self-confident first recognize it no longer represents a New World, separate and apart." —David Gergen

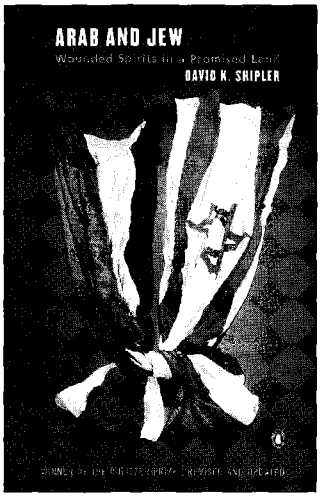
"The realities underlying U.S. foreign policy are shifting, so we all need ideas on how to think through opportunities and problems. Henry Nau provides a carefully thought framework of ideas and shows us how to use that framework. This volume is not just for reading, but even more for studying and thinking."—George P. Shultz

A Century Foundation Book
Cornell Studies in Political Economy
8 line drawings, 9 tables $29.95

Cornell University Press
At bookstores or call, (800) 666-2211 • www.cornellpress.cornell.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize—now extensively revised and updated



ARAB AND JEW
WOUNDED SPIRITS IN A PROMISED LAND
DAVID K. SHIPLER

"The best and most comprehensive work there is in the English language on this subject."
—Walter Laqueur, *The New York Times*

"A superb journalistic meditation that captures the Middle East's mirror images of intolerance."
—*The Philadelphia Inquirer*

"A rich, penetrating, and moving portrayal of Arab-Jewish hostility, told in human terms." —*Newsday*

Revised to include a new foreword, addenda to most chapters, new notes and annotations, and an epilogue entitled "Twilight War, Twilight Peace" based on conversations with high school seniors at a Jewish school in Jerusalem and a Palestinian school in Ramallah, first in 1993 and again in 2001.

Penguin 656 pp.
0-14-200229-1 $17.00

PENGUIN PUTNAM INC.
Academic Mktg. Dept., 375 Hudson St., NY, NY 10014-3657
www.penguinputnam.com

the roots of the disaster have already appeared. From Bernard Lewis, the eminent scholar of Middle Eastern history and culture, we have a short book entitled *What Went Wrong?*,* and the editors of *Foreign Affairs* have assembled a collection of essays by leading experts under the title, *How Did This Happen? Terrorism and the New War*.† But in the quest to comprehend the Islamic world, few scholars have been as influential as John L. Esposito, who has now come out with *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam*.

Esposito is the past president of the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) and the founding director of the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, which is part of Georgetown University's prestigious School of Foreign Service. With a staff that includes two other past MESA presidents, the center has established itself as a major source of information about Islam, one from which both the U.S. government and the Washington media draw heavily.

Esposito's own particular interest in recent years has been radical Islam, a phenomenon he believes the West has long misunderstood. Indeed, a decade ago he published *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (1992), where he argued that Islamic fundamentalist groups did not present a menace. "Many Islamic movements," he wrote, have turned from revolution to reform, and have "joined the rising chorus of voices calling for political liberalization." As a result, "while they are a challenge to the outdated assumptions of the established order and to autocratic regimes, they do not necessarily threaten American interests." Esposito went on to contend that these Islamic radical movements were misjudged by those who overlooked the factors impelling so many Arabs and Muslims to reject the West, including "America's tilt toward Israel" and "its support for oppressive regimes."

A lot has happened since Esposito wrote *The Islamic Threat*. There was the 1996 bombing of the U.S. Khobar Towers barracks in Saudi Arabia, the 1998 bombings of two U.S. embassies in East Africa by al Qaeda terrorists, the five-year Taliban rule in Afghanistan, the two-year wave of Palestinian/Islamist suicide bombings aimed at Israeli civilians, and the death of some 3,000 Americans at the hands of Islamic fanatics. On the basis of these and other developments, it would be fair to conclude that Esposito's 1992 forecast was at the least flawed, and some might conclude it was basically wrong—that is, that Islamist radicalism was more a reality than a myth.

IN HIS latest book, Esposito makes scant reference to his earlier analysis of the Islamists' turn from revolution. Instead, he devotes 45 pages to jihad, a concept that in *The Islamic Threat* merited only two paragraphs and was defined there as "the lifelong struggle to be virtuous." In *Unholy War*, Esposito offers a fuller range of the meanings Muslims have assigned to this term.

We learn, for example, about the "sword verses" of the Qur'an, quoted by those who today advocate unconditional warfare against unbelievers (verses like "slay the idolators wherever you find them"). We learn about the distinguished scholar ibn Taymiyya (1268-1328), who ordered a jihad against the Mongols despite their conversion to Islam, arguing that "their failure to implement Shari'a [Islamic law] rendered the Mongols apostates and hence the lawful object" of slaughter. In other words, we now learn that when modern extremists call for jihad against Muslims deemed un-Islamic, or for spreading the religion by the sword, they are following well-established tradition.

Coming to the present, *Unholy War* also offers a brief biography of Osama bin Laden, plus a lengthy

* Oxford, 192 pp., $22.00.

† Edited by Gideon Rose and James F. Hoge, Jr., Public Affairs, 352 pp., $14.00.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

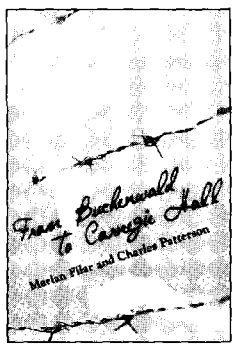
analysis of what Esposito calls the "armies of God" in contemporary Egypt, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, the Palestinian Authority, and Central Asia. In each of these cases, Esposito stresses how the Islamist phenomenon is rooted in "political and economic conditions." It is these conditions, he writes, which, "coupled with repression, spawn militant opposition movements that misuse Islam to motivate and legitimate violence and terrorism."

Unholy War concludes with a long chapter on where the U.S. should go from here. An essential first step, Esposito suggests, is to admit that we are often "lost in our litany of slogans and easy answers," and that, to find our way, we need to obtain a better understanding of the widespread "anger and frustration with American foreign policy among many in Arab and Muslim societies." A crucial second step is to recognize that, even as many Islamic movements in recent years "have eschewed violence and terrorism," many of the world's peaceful Muslims regard America's "espousal of self-determination, democratization, and human rights as disingenuous." Only by bringing our policies more into line with our proclaimed values can we hope to dispel this perception and win the trust of the Muslim world.

As in his previous book, Esposito searches in *Unholy War* for ways to blame the West for every ill of the Muslim world. We are informed at one juncture that many Muslims are frustrated because America did too little to help their brethren in Bosnia and Kosovo—as if the U.S. has not just fought a major war on behalf of the Kosovo Muslims while the Muslim states themselves sat on the sidelines. Elsewhere we learn that much of the Muslim world remains politically unstable or underdeveloped because it is composed of states that are only several decades old—a peculiar explanation in the case of countries like Iran and Egypt that are heirs to ancient and sophisticated civilizations.

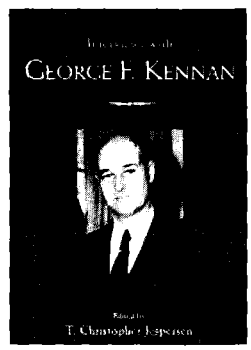
Esposito also faults the legacy of imperialism left by the now-departed European powers. The "state and state of mind of the Muslim world today," he writes, owes much to "foreign dominance and Muslim subordination to Europe." Never mind that the colonial power that ruled the Arab world for four centuries was Muslim Ottoman Turkey, while European control of the region lasted only a few brief decades.

Esposito's eagerness to attack the West at every turn stands in sharp contrast to his habit of excusing troubling Islamist practices. In discussing the status of women in Muslim society, for example, he cautions that "charting the progress or repression of women, whether under secular or religious governments, is a tricky task." On the Islamic prac-



From Buchenwald to Carnegie Hall
By Marian Filar and Charles Patterson
"Among the many astonishing accounts of Holocaust survival, this [memoir by the renowned pianist] is one of the most remarkable." –*Booklist*
$29 hardcover

Huey P. Newton
The Radical Theorist
By Judson L. Jeffries
"The most detailed study of the political ideology of Newton and the Black Panther Party to date and as such should be required reading for all serious students of twentieth-century American and African American history, Black politics and comparative political ideologies." –Yohuru R. Williams, author of *Black Politics/White Power: Civil Rights, Black Power* and *Black Panthers in New Haven*
$35 hardcover



Interviews with George F. Kennan
Edited by T. Christopher Jespersen
Forty years of collected talks with the American statesman who delineated the West's Cold War policy of Soviet containment
$35 hardcover

UNIVERSITY PRESS OF MISSISSIPPI
www.upress.state.ms.us

Find these titles at your favorite bookstore or order them from the publisher at 1-800-737-7788.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tice, mandatory in many countries, of shielding women from sight, he comments: "If many associate the veil with the oppression of women, others regard veiling as an authentic practice that preserves the dignity, freedom, and modesty of women." It would be interesting to know how many women of Afghanistan agree that it is a "tricky task" to determine if their status improved or declined under the rule of the Taliban.

Another relic of Esposito's earlier book is his habit of finding Islamist moderates under every bed—however much the evidence may suggest otherwise. We are told that, among Palestinians, "a great majority adapted to the political realities [of Oslo], renouncing violence and engaging in direct participation in politics." But public-opinion polling among Palestinians over the course of the last year shows, to the contrary, massive support, usually above 80 percent, for suicide bombings. This, if anything, has proved to be one of the most popular forms of "direct participation" in Palestinian politics.

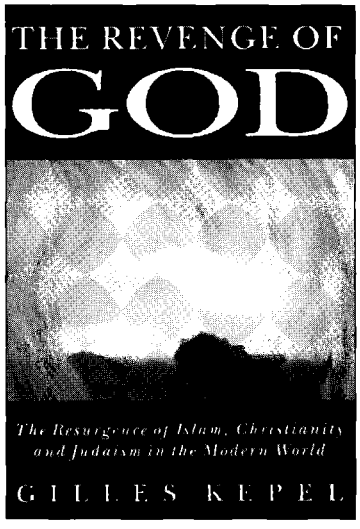
In his eagerness to showcase Islamist "moderates," finally, Esposito appears not to have noticed that of the three political leaders he cites as examples, one is in jail (Anwar Ibrahim of Malaysia), one was thrown out of office (Abdurrahman Wahid of Indonesia), and one has been systematically stripped of his authority by hardliners who control the levers of power (Mohammad Khatami of Iran).

IT MAY be tempting to dismiss the intellectual tendency represented by Esposito as inconsequential—after all, U.S. policy toward Islamist radicals and those who harbor them has of late been rather tough. But the fact is that the same policy-makers who today have adopted a hard line on a country-by-country basis continue to harbor illusions about the larger threat we face. This is no accident, for it is the Esposito view of political Islam that has dominated the thinking of policy-makers for the last decade or more. As Martin Kramer has documented in *Ivory Towers on Sand*,* those who downplayed the dangers posed by the currents of radical Islam had become, by the early 1990's, an entrenched academic elite, while those sounding the alarm were effectively marginalized.

The shock delivered to the United States nine months ago has reopened this broad discussion, and in the world of opinion there are encouraging signs of a more realistic appraisal of our adversaries. Bernard Lewis, the object of Esposito's scorn over the years, is a frequent guest on National Public Radio, and his *What Went Wrong?* has been on the best-seller lists. Martin Kramer's exposé of the corrupt state of Middle Eastern studies in the universities has been given a wide and attentive hearing.

But that does not mean that a book like *Holy War* will simply sink

* Reviewed by Hillel Halkin in the January 2002 COMMENTARY.



By the author of Jihad

THE REVENGE OF GOD

THE RESURGENCE OF ISLAM, CHRISTIANITY, AND JUDAISM IN THE MODERN WORLD

Gilles Kepel

"*The Revenge of God* offers a powerful and persuasive antidote to those over-reductionist accounts of fundamentalism that see it exclusively as a reaction to modernity and secularism. This is not only a book for academic specialists within the social sciences; it is also for anyone seeking to understand those puzzling and parallel movements within contemporary religion that seem to be setting out to reconquer today's world."

—Graham Howes, University of Cambridge

In this translation of the best-selling French book, *La Revanche de Dieu*, Gilles Kepel, one of Europe's leading authorities on Islamic societies, offers a compelling account of the resurgence of religious belief in the modern world. His focus is radical movements within Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

According to Kepel, we have much to learn from today's religious movements. Like the workers' movements of yesteryear, they have a singular capacity to reveal the ills of society. Whether or not we agree with their diagnoses, they offer an important and perceptive critique of our society at the dawn of the millennium.

224 pages • $20.95 paper

"In the contentious admixture of politics and religion, Mr. Kepel is most unusual in not seeking to press a particular view.... He instead seeks intelligently to understand and to explain the influence religion is likely to have in the world in the foreseeable future. And he is persuasive when he concludes that, for better and worse, the political influence of religion will be much greater than it has been in the recent past."

—The Economist

penn state press

820 N. University Drive, USB 1, Suite C • University Park, PA 16802 • fax 1-877-PSU-BOOK • www.psupress.org

AVAILABLE IN BOOKSTORES, OR ORDER TOLL FREE 1-800-326-9180

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

beneath the waves. As part of its response to September 11, Congress voted millions in extra funding for university centers similar to the one Esposito directs. This hardly augurs well for a deeper or more honest understanding of Islam and the Middle East, let alone of the Islamist threat.

Capital Punishment

The Death Penalty:
An American History
by Stuart Banner
Harvard. 408 pp. $29.95

Reviewed by
Jonathan Kay

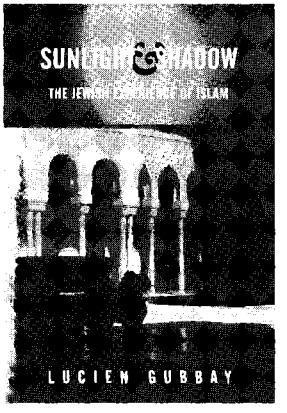
Is the death penalty on its way out in the United States? Given the recent successes of its opponents, one might begin to think so. Disturbing tales of narcoleptic defense counsel, or of death-row prisoners newly freed by DNA evidence, have become regular items in the press. Two years ago, the Republican governor of Illinois became so concerned about the number of death-row inmates exonerated by outside investigators that he imposed a moratorium on executions. This April, a commission appointed at his behest recommended either a radical overhaul of capital punishment in the state or outright repeal.

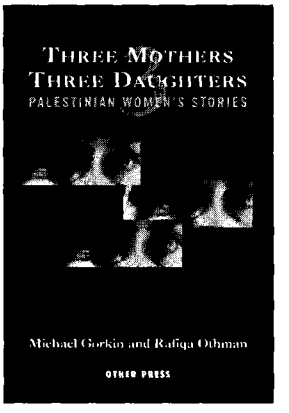
Still, death-penalty "abolitionists" (as they call themselves) have their work cut out for them. Some 65 percent of Americans support capital punishment, and over 80 percent endorsed the execution of the Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh. When the Justice Department recently announced it would seek the death penalty in the

Jonathan Kay, *a new contributor, is editorials editor of the* National Post *in Toronto.*

From Other Press's CULTURAL STUDIES SERIES,
edited by Samir Dayal

JEWS, MUSLIMS, AND PALESTINIANS
FACES OF CONFLICT





SUNLIGHT AND SHADOW:
THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE OF ISLAM
Lucien Gubbay

Despite Jews' subordinate status in Muslim society, it was under Muslim rule that early Judaism flowered into a brilliant international civilization. Recounting the history of Jews in the Islamic world from Muhammad to the present, the acclaimed author of *Origins and Quest for the Messiah*, fosters a better understanding of an enriching, yet problematic relationship.

"Without cant or rancour, Gubbay writes clearly and fairly on the close and continuing relationship between Jews and Muslims."
—Dr. Zaki Badawi, the Muslim College, London

Paper / 1-892746-69-7 / 188 pages $18.00

THREE MOTHERS, THREE DAUGHTERS:
PALESTINIAN WOMEN'S STORIES
Michael Gorkin and Rafiqa Othman

These beautifully rendered narratives bear witness to six women's experiences of Israeli occupation, their memories of the wars of 1948 and 1967, and the profound changes that occurred in their political and personal lives.

"One of the most moving books I have ever read."
—*Jerusalem Post Literary Supplement*

Paper / 1-892746-45-X / 256 pages $20.00

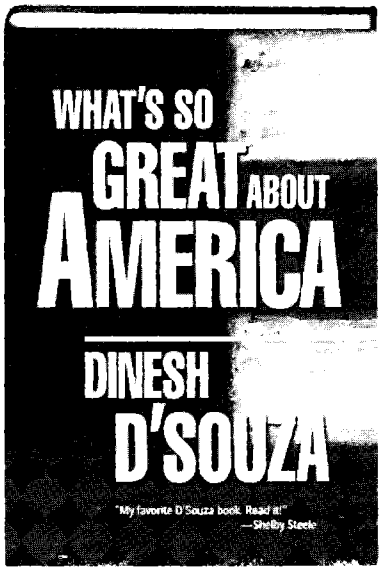
Order online at **otherbooks.com** and save 15% or call toll free **1-877-THE OTHER.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why America Is Still the Greatest Country on Earth...

DEFENDING AMERICA!

and Why the Left, the Multi-Culturalists, and Militant Islam Are All Wrong



Bookstore Price: $27.95
Regnery Direct Price: $24.95

America is under attack as never before. Not only from foreign terrorists, but also from within.

Islamic terrorists declare America the "Great Satan." Many Europeans complain about America spreading its cultural wasteland. And perhaps worst of all, here in our own country, those on **the political Left still blame America for every ill in the world.** Left-wing multiculturalism – dominant in our own schools and universities – teaches students that Western and American culture is no better than, and probably worse than, Third World cultures.

Does this imply the death of the West? Quite the opposite, says best-selling author Dinesh D'Souza. In his new book, *What's So Great About America,* D'Souza claims that the flood of immigrants coming to America proves that our values, our system, our freedoms, and our culture are irresistible and superior. The problem, he asserts, is our own inability or refusal to **celebrate what makes America great.**

In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks on our country, *What's So Great About America* offers a powerful defense for America and exposes the truth about who our enemies really are.

10% OFF!
FREE SHIPPING!
When You Order
From Regnery Direct

Available at your local bookstore or Call Regnery Direct at: 1-888-219-4747

Mention priority code: RSP365 R1025

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

case of Zacarias Moussaoui, the man alleged to be the missing twentieth hijacker in the September 11 conspiracy, protest in the U.S. was almost non-existent.

As Stuart Banner demonstrates in *The Death Penalty*, there is nothing new about this kind of ebb and flow in the public standing of capital punishment. Throughout our history, critics have tried to brand the death penalty as the vestige of a more primitive age, a practice that an enlightened society would reject. And each time they have advanced their cause—but only so far.

Banner, a legal historian at Washington University, begins with the penal tradition that the early American colonists inherited from Britain. Execution was then the customary fate not only for convicted murderers and rapists but also for burglars, thieves, arsonists, and counterfeiters. Still, though the death penalty was uncontroversial, executions were viewed in this era as solemn, abhorrent events. At hangings, ministers delivered elaborate sermons that were often reproduced as commercial pamphlets. Convicts were expected to recite their crimes and discourage others from following in their path.

As for opposition to capital punishment, it was at first confined largely to Quaker communities, but became more mainstream in the mid-18th century—though only with regard to minor crimes. As the *Georgia Gazette* asked in 1767, "Who can avoid pitying poor young fellows, whose existence is cut off in the prime and vigor of life, for the paltry theft of a handkerchief, or of a watch, or for writing a few words on a slip of paper, with a fraudulent intention?" By the 1780's, some newspapers were calling for an outright ban.

This development, Banner shows, could also be traced in part to a shift in the then-commonly held theories of human nature. Once seen as an autonomous moral agent, the criminal was increasingly cast as a drone-like product of his environment. Doctors were beginning to gain a primitive understanding of insanity as a medical condition, and some politicians began to link criminality with disease.

Calvinists, who traditionally emphasized the innate depravity of man and the necessity of retribution, were put on the defensive by these ideas, as well as by newly ascendant forms of evangelical Protestantism, with their focus on sympathy and forgiveness. As Banner writes, there was

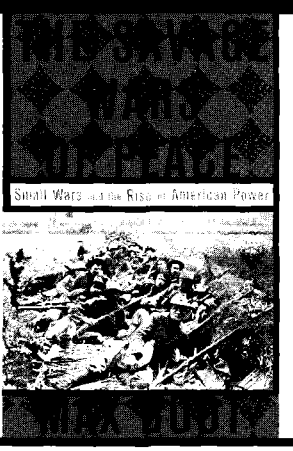
> a new faith in humanity and in the possibility of progress. If people were virtuous at birth, if evil was an intruder arriving from outside rather than a part of human nature, one might design institutions to disinfect the criminal, to restore him to moral health. In this light, the gallows seemed a product of ignorance and superstition.

Economic trends also contributed to strengthening the forces of resistance to capital punishment. Prior to the industrial revolution, prisons were an unaffordable option. The agrarian society of the early colonies simply did not produce enough surplus wealth to permit significant numbers of able-bodied men—whether guards or prisoners—to live economically unproductive lives at public expense. When machines made America rich, it could afford the luxury of not killing its criminals.

The reform movement stalled in the 1790's, but in the Northern states picked up again a half-century later. By 1860, no Northern state imposed capital punishment for any crime other than murder or treason. Some went further: in 1846, Michigan became the first state to abolish the death penalty for murder, and Rhode Island and Wisconsin soon followed.

In the South, where life was more violent and there was a perceived need to keep slaves terrorized, change came more gradually. As late as the 1950's, rape was punished with

"Anyone who wants to understand why America has permanently entered a new era in international relations must read *The Savage Wars of Peace.*"
—Los Angeles Times Book Review



"A brilliant, highly original analysis of the American Way of waging battle in a sinful world. Brimming with sharp anecdotes, pragmatic reasoning and a deep grasp of military history."
—Douglas Brinkley,
author of *The Unfinished Presidency*

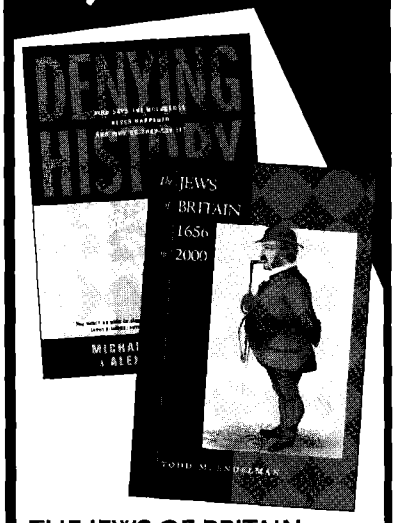
"A groundbreaking book that ...could change your views on one of the most important issues facing our nation: the use of military force as a policy instrument."
—Richard Holbrooke,
Former Ambassador to the United Nations

"Vivid, deftly researched, and illuminating, *The Savage Wars of Peace* couldn't be more timely or compelling. Put it on every national security policymaker's desk." —Jay Winik,
author of *April 1865: The Month that Saved America*

BASIC BOOKS
WHEREVER BOOKS ARE SOLD
BASIC BOOKS
A Member of the Perseus Books Group
www.basicbooks.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Perspectives on JUDAICA



THE JEWS OF BRITAIN, 1656 TO 2000
by Todd M. Endelman

"Elegantly crafted, studded with carefully balanced and shrewd judgments, and brimming with original and intelligent observations."
—David B. Ruderman, author of *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key*

Jewish Communities in the Modern World
An S. Mark Taper Foundation Book in Jewish Studies
$22.50 paperback, $55.00 hardcover

DENYING HISTORY
Who Says the Holocaust Never Happened and Why Do They Say It?
by Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman
Foreword by Arthur Hertzberg

***NOW IN PAPERBACK*—"Shows in convincing detail how Holocaust deniers wrest sinister untruths from the documentary evidence.... Shermer and Grobman mount a patiently stunning case that denies the deniers."**
—*Los Angeles Times Book Review*

An S. Mark Taper Foundation Book in Jewish Studies, A selection of the History Book Club, $16.95 paperback

At bookstores or order (800) 822-6657
www.ucpress.edu
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

death in sixteen Southern states, and burglary in four. Even now a substantial geographic gap remains. Since 1976, the ten states of the former Confederacy have accounted for 75 percent of all U.S. executions.

IN THE closing chapters of this book, Banner provides a detailed analysis of the major capital-punishment cases of the mid-20th century. Here, as in other areas of constitutional law, the Justices of the Warren and Burger Courts proved willing over the years to substitute their own views for those of democratically elected state legislatures. The trend peaked with the 1972 decision in *Furman* v. *Georgia*, which had the effect of striking down every capital-punishment law in the country, principally on the theory that the death penalty, as then applied, was arbitrary and capricious.

The decision was hailed by abolitionists as an epochal triumph. In Arkansas, Banner notes, the electric chair was unplugged and used as a barber's chair. In Pennsylvania the execution room was partitioned into offices. In New Hampshire, it was used to store vegetables.

Yet *Furman* did not put an end to capital punishment. It simply brought the death penalty under a new set of procedural restrictions. Within four years of the decision, 35 states and the federal government had enacted revamped death-penalty laws. In 1977, Utah executed Gary Gilmore by firing squad, making him the first American in a decade to suffer capital punishment. Despite the effort of defense lawyers to slow the process by endlessly litigating procedural issues, criminals were being put to death in the U.S. at the rate of about one per week by the 90's.

ONE COULD not ask for a more dispassionate and comprehensive history of the death penalty in America than this book. Yet it suffers from the defects of its chief virtue, which is Banner's almost clinical detachment from his material. This lack is most felt from the literary point of view. Though Banner has assembled an impressive array of primary sources, including diaries, sermons, and broadsheets, he generally draws on them only to illustrate the intellectual climate of past eras, and so we learn little about the colorful characters, brutal crimes, and high courtroom drama that capital cases inevitably involve. Readers with no special interest in the dry details of criminal law, early American history, or the physical mechanics of gallows and electric chairs will be left cold and, probably, bored.

Though Banner gives no indication of where he himself stands on capital punishment—another instance of the book's sometimes maddening neutrality—the historical pattern he describes should give comfort to supporters of the death penalty. It suggests that our own era heralds not so much the twilight of capital punishment as a temporary rise in abolitionist sentiment, not unlike similar short-lived movements of the past. In the course of our history, activists have always been able to place limits—sometimes salutary ones—on the application of the death penalty, but they have repeatedly failed in their wider effort to end it altogether.

There is reason to think the result will be no different today. Despite all the recent agitation against the death penalty, Americans remain convinced that the overwhelming evil represented by capital crime calls for extraordinary punishment. In the words of Judge Alex Kozinski of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit—whose moral urgency is seemingly not shared by Banner, his one-time law clerk—"Most of us continue to believe that those who show utter contempt for human life by committing remorseless, premeditated murder justly forfeit the right to their own life."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

History Calling

Six Days of War:
June 1967 and the Making
of the Modern Middle East
by Michael B. Oren
Oxford. 419 pp. $30.00

Reviewed by
Victor Davis Hanson

ISRAEL WON two conflicts with its neighbors before the Six-Day war, and one after it. But the modern Middle East had never witnessed anything quite like what transpired between June 5 and 10, 1967. Even today, the astounding chain of events of some 35 years ago reads more like fiction than history.

Cut off from military aid by France's Charles de Gaulle, hitherto a reliable arms supplier, and not yet an ally of the United States—which had recently sold or given away hundreds of millions of dollars in arms to the Arab world—a beleaguered Israel found itself surrounded by massive armies in Syria, Egypt, and Jordan. These combined militaries fielded 900 combat aircraft, 5,000 tanks, and 500,000 soldiers, ensuring an astounding edge of three-to-one or even greater in every category of military asset.

Preening with sophisticated Soviet arms, and with assurances that the Soviets would hold off the Americans while his pan-Arabic forces liquidated the Jews, Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser prepared to marshal the Arab nations for what he called "the operation that will surprise the world," reversing the humiliating Arab defeats of 1948-49 and 1956. Privately, Nasser told his generals to launch the attack (code-named Plan Dawn) by "June 5 at the latest." Ahmad Shuqayri of the PLO, a terrorist organization founded three years earlier and headquartered in Cairo, summed up the increasing jubilation in the Arab world at the rumors of war: "We shall destroy Israel and its inhabitants, and as for survivors—if there are any—the boats are ready to deport them." Just as today, a murderous Assad ruled in Syria and a passive-aggressive Hashemite king in Jordan. Each based the degree of his own bellicosity not on confidence in his armies but on lies and distortions from his intelligence services, promises from Egypt, threats from the Soviet Union, back-door maneuvering with the U.S., and fear of the omnipresent "Arab street."

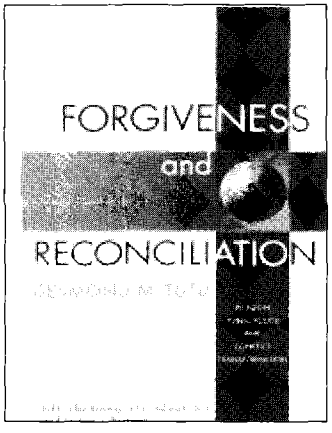
As 1967 wore on, Nasser proceeded to evict the UN's peacekeepers from Gaza, close the Strait of Tiran and thereby cut off Israel's access to imported oil from its Red Sea terminus, increase the number of flights over Israeli territory, and sponsor terrorist raids from Lebanon and Gaza. For their part, the Israelis quietly prepared for the worst, making plans to strike the Egyptian air force's 420 sophisticated Soviet jets—the linchpin of Plan Dawn—while they were still on the ground. And so, in the event, they did. In just 100 minutes on the morning of June 5, Israeli pilots carried out 164 sorties, destroying 286 planes and wrecking thirteen air bases. Minutes after the attack, General Mordechai Hod reported that "the Egyptian air force has ceased to exist."

These early Arab losses were catastrophic; but they were also not reported in the Arab press—and the Israelis themselves were observing silence. As an Egyptian intelligence officer later lamented, "The whole world thought our forces were on the outskirts of Tel Aviv."

VICTOR DAVIS HANSON, *a professor of classics at California State University, Fresno, is the author of, among other books,* Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Power *and* Who Killed Homer? *This is his first appearance in* COMMENTARY.

TEMPLETON
FOUNDATION PRESS
A NEW VISION OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION
Religion, Public Policy, and Conflict Transformation
Edited by Raymond G. Helmick, S.J., and Rodney L. Petersen
Foreword by Desmond M. Tutu



A unique collection of essays from experts in the area of conflict resolution, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation* focuses on the theology, public policy, psychological and social theory, and social policy implementation of forgiveness.

"Forgiveness and Reconciliation *is by far the best work to date on the role of forgiveness in peace and conflict. This is mainly due to the high quality of the many authors of this volume who . . . represent the most cutting edge thinking . . . on this subject."* —Dr. Marc Gopin, Tufts University

ISBN 1-890151-49-1, hardbound, $34.95
ISBN 1-890151-84-X, paperback, $22.95

TEMPLETON FOUNDATION PRESS
Telephone: 800-621-2736
www.templetonpress.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the meantime, the fighting on the ground went on at a furious pace. Israel's defense forces found themselves battling—and pushing back—Egyptians in the Sinai, Jordanians on the West Bank, and Syrians on the Golan Heights.

The ultimate butcher's bill for the six days of conflict was staggering: 30,000 Arab casualties, including 5,000 Egyptians captured along with 21 of their generals. Military hardware worth billions was destroyed outright; indeed, the Jordanian, Syrian, and Egyptian militaries were temporarily out of commission altogether. As had happened in 1956, and would happen again in 1973, it was not Arab armies but outside pressure and a sense of self-restraint that kept the Israelis from rolling into downtown Cairo, Amman, and Damascus.

WITH ISRAEL'S triumph, however, there also came a reminder of the perennial dilemma that has faced that country from its birth—translating tactical success into strategic victory. In the aftermath of the war, the Arab states rushed to replenish their arms, while both France and the United States delayed military assistance to Israel. Rather than causing introspection or a movement of democratic reform within the Arab world, defeat only deepened the sense of shame and the thirst for vengeance. Arab autocracies mobilized to threaten oil embargos against the West, to spread terrorism worldwide, and to prepare for the next round of fighting.

Israel also now found itself with 1.2 million Palestinians under its control in the West Bank and Gaza, indigent and stateless refugees who, despite their efforts to destroy the Jewish state, expected (and got) better treatment from it than what they had been receiving until now at the hands of Jordan and Egypt. Arab leaders, quietly relieved that the Palestinians were Israel's—and no longer their own—immediate problem, championed their cause more vociferously than ever. The world turned its attention to the West Bank and Gaza and forgot about the anti-Jewish pogroms that arose in Egypt and Libya, not to mention the 7,000 Jews who were immediately arrested and expelled from Baghdad and Damascus.

In short, rather than being a prelude to lasting peace, Israel's brilliant victory in the Six-Day war was followed by years of terror originating from land it had never sought to acquire but could not afford to give up. On the diplomatic and cultural front, having lost its status as an underdog, it came to be seen, and to be portrayed, as a bullying regional superpower.

MICHAEL OREN'S riveting account of this entire saga—drawn from previously untapped American, Russian, and Israeli archives, along with Syrian and Jordanian sources—puts to rest a number of old misconceptions and untruths. One of them is that, with its predawn raid on the Egyptian air fields, Israel itself "started" the war; in fact, as Oren shows, Nasser was just hours away from bombing Israeli cities and hitting the nuclear reactor at Dimona. Nor was the Israel Defense Force (IDF) planning a war of conquest; it believed that its preemptive strike on Egyptian planes would buy, at most, a year or two of peace. The conquest of the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights was mostly the result of ad-hoc fighting by commanders in the field. So unprepared were many of them that they got lost when they reached the Old City of Jerusalem and had to negotiate its unfamiliar streets.

The Israelis were not the only ones confused. Throughout much of the war, the U.S. was buffeted by threats of intervention from the Russians and lies about its role being propagated by Radio Cairo and Damascus. Our embassies were under siege in Arab capitals. To compound matters, the American surveillance ship *Liberty* was mistakenly hit by Israeli jets. All this, coupled with the quagmire of Vietnam, hampered a well-meaning President Lyndon B. Johnson from properly assessing or exploiting his full range of options.

There is an eerie feeling of déjà vu in reading Oren's history just now, and the cumulative effect of his meticulous research is quite depressing. Today we talk in hushed tones about Saddam Hussein's horrific use of gas against his own people in Iraq—forgetting that Nasser had no qualms about gassing Yemeni villages. Ten years ago, in the Gulf war, Israelis donned gas masks—but in 1967 they had to be given thousands (from Germany!) in preparation for Nasser's threatened attacks on Tel Aviv.

There was also the same chilling rhetoric, and from the same chilling places—the threats to exterminate the Jews, the lies that Americans were fighting alongside Israelis, the lunatic claim that Arab martyrs were

RUMORS of JUSTICE

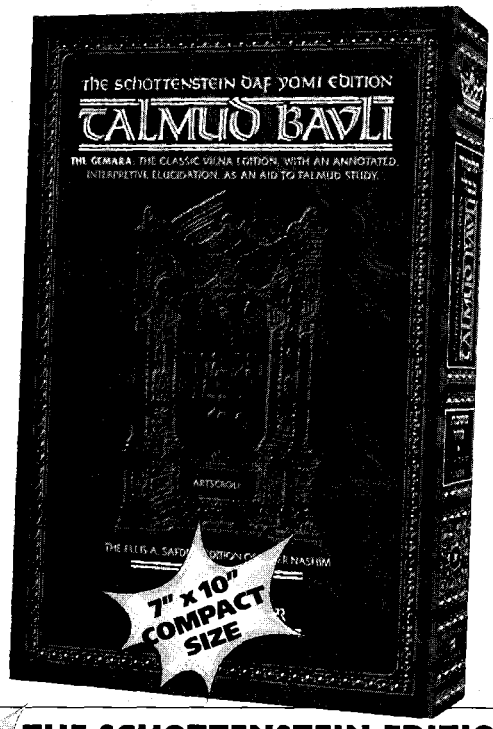
TOM EAGAN

The ghost of Jefferson haunts attorney Howard Lerner to get the Ten Commandments back in the courtrooms in a *roman a clef* novella. "Eagan is one of the few genuine satirists writing today..." —Louis Phillips, NY poet/playwright.

Aran Press
1036 S. Fifth St.
Louisville, KY 40203
tel (502) 568-6622; fax (502) 561-1124
<aranpres@aye.net>
http//members.aye.net/~aranpres/
Paperback 128 pages, $9.95
ISBN: 0-9661588-3-0

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

new from ArtScroll


the schottenstein daf yomi edition
talmud bavli
the gemara, the classic vilna edition, with an annotated, interpretive elucidation, as an aid to talmud study
7" x 10" COMPACT SIZE

NOW AVAILABLE IN

the schottenstein daf yomi edition

talmud bavli

TRACTATE BAVA BASRA

Volume III

BERACHOS	2 Volumes:
SHABBOS	1 Volume:
MEGILLAH	*Complete in 1 vol.*
NAZIR	2 Volumes:
SOTAH	2 Volumes:
GITTIN	2 Volumes:
KIDDUSHIN	2 Volumes:
BAVA KAMMA	3 Volumes:
BAVA METZIA	3 Volumes:
BAVA BASRA	3 Volumes:
MAKKOS	*Complete in 1 vol.*
AVODAH ZARAH	2 Volumes:

24 VOLUMES are now available in The Schottenstein Daf Yomi Edition of the Talmud

NEW! **THE SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION INTERLINEAR SABBATH AND HOLIDAY SIDDUR IS NOW AVAILABLE IN BOTH FULL AND POCKET SIZES.**

ARTSCROLL CLASSICS ON PIRKEI AVOS/ETHICS OF THE FATHERS

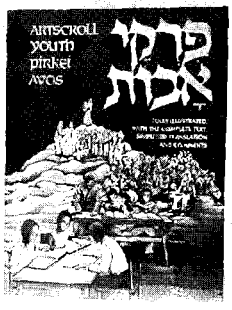
All Artscroll Pirkei Avos Volumes contain the full hebrew text of Pirkei Avos, a contemporary translation, and full commentary as described below.

THE PIRKEI AVOS TREASURY

Pirkei Avos brings together how the Sages actually lived, and the ethical teachings that have guided and inspired Jews century after century. This magnificent anthology includes insights and anecdotes. It explains the text of Avos with clarity. Ideal for daily study or occasional browsing. Contains full Hebrew vowelized text; new flowing translation. Commentary by **Rabbi Moshe Lieber**; Overview by **Rabbi Nosson Scherman**.

One-volume gift edition: 8½" x 11" size, ribbon place-marker. **3-vol. slip-cased gift edition:** 4"x 6" size.

YOUTH PIRKEI AVOS



This book brings timeless wisdom to a new generation. The illustrations and comments are carefully chosen to teach the lessons of the Mishnah. By **Rabbi Avie Gold**; illustrated by **Michael Horen** and **Andras Halasz**.

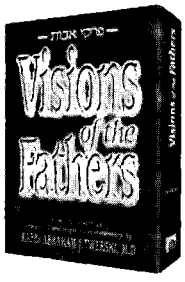
8½" x 11" page size, full-color illustrations, complete Hebrew text, simplified translation and commentary, sturdy binding and stain-resistantcovers.

PIRKEI AVOS

Avos is a book of ethics, honesty, and advice. But at its very beginning it tells us that even this part of Jewish life came from Sinai. All of that is part of Judaism. This volume presents a new translation and concise commentary on Avos, and contains an Overview that sheds new light on this book.

By **Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz**.

Also available: **Pocket Size Edition** including **Grace After Meals and Sheva Berachos**. Quantity discounts available.



VISIONS OF THE FATHERS

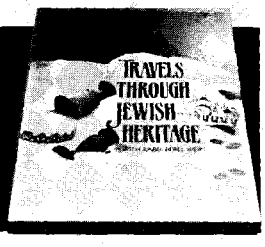
Pirkei Avos with an insightful and inspiring commentary

Chassidic scholar and renowned psychiatrist, **Rabbi Dr. Twerski** fuses both disciplines in this marvelous treatment of Ethics of the Fathers.

Beautiful reading, provocative ideas, enticing stories, sound insights, acute observations — it's all here in the inimitable Twerski manner. He focuses on what the Sages say to **us** in our daily lives, and he illustrates it beautifully with delightful anecdotes, from today and from chassidic lore.

From RABBI BEREL WEIN'S Popular Audio Cassette Series: TRAVELS THROUGH JEWISH HERITAGE

Ethics of the Fathers is a Mishnaic repository of timeless wisdom and Jewish ethics, studied by Jews for centuries. Noted lecturer Rabbi Berel Wein analyzes each mishnah in Pirkei Avos through the commentary of the Rambam. Follow his insights as rabbis from two thousand years ago uncover the strengths and weaknesses of humankind, guiding listeners today through issues of self, family, and community. Two-part series, 12 tapes per set.



Available at your local Hebrew bookstore or call: 1-800-MESORAH • In NYS: (718) 921-9000 • FAX: (718) 680-1875 • www.artscroll.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on the march to a great victory. Indeed, some of the principals in the present conflict got their start before and during the Six-Day war—the thirty-something Yasir Arafat leading terrorists into Israel on a murderous nocturnal raid, the young Hosni Mubarak, then in the Egyptian air force, claiming falsely that his fellow pilots had encountered American jets, the fathers of the present Syrian and Jordanian rulers doing then what the sons are doing now.

In his systematic and exhaustively researched narrative, Oren presents the whole frightening tale with a detached matter-of-factness. As an Israeli, he is perhaps reluctant to offer any explicit answers to one of the most baffling military questions of all: how the Israelis routed their enemies so thoroughly on the battlefield. Yet his narrative provides plenty of reasons for the Arabs' defeat, most of which come down to the role of culture in modern warfare.

The Israelis had been scrupulous about maintaining their tanks and planes in prime condition, ensuring that their dated models were far more battle-ready than the state-of-the-art weaponry held by the Arabs, 20 to 30 percent of which was so ill-kept as to be inoperable on any given day. Once the fighting began, Israeli officers talked constantly with their enlisted men, arguing and improvising as they went along; by contrast, Egyptian generals and grandees feared execution if they reported honestly the unfolding disaster of the first day, and did not dare make on-the-ground changes in their preconceived and unrealistic battle scripts. Israeli generals braved gunfire; many Arab commanders ran away before their troops did. At the government level, the Israeli cabinet hourly hammered out military solutions to unexpected crises with (as the record shows) banter, black humor, and candor; on the other side, Nasser, Hussein, and Assad lived in terror that their generals were lying to them, even as they could only lie to their own people.

The heroes of the book emerge as an odd array of truly brilliant, courageous, and eccentric Israelis, military and civilian alike, not all of them mutual friends and many of them downright rivals or enemies: Ben-Gurion, Dayan, Rabin, Eshkol, Elazar, Hod, Allon, Eban, Meir, Peres, and, yes, Sharon. What they shared was Pattonesque audacity and, above all, no illusions about the nature of the danger their country faced.

From where did such rare officers and statesmen come? Some were battle-hardened veterans of World War II; others were Holocaust survivors. A few were experienced, wounded, and maimed veterans of the 1948 and 1956 wars. None of them really felt any innate hatred toward their Arab neighbors; all instinctively mistrusted them, and were confident they could be beaten in a fair fight. One wonders if Israel will ever see such types again, in such profusion—and one can only be thankful that there are still a tiny few of the 1967 generation in the country's current hour of peril.

Michael Oren has written a near masterpiece of judicious but captivating history. In its suspense and human drama it is reminiscent of Steven Runciman's *The Fall of Constantinople* or Donald Morris's *The Washing of the Spears*; in its scholarship and professionalism, Gerhard Weinberg's *A World At Arms*. While Oren's goal is to write history, not contemporary political analysis, *Six Days of War* turns out to be a far better guide to the present crisis than what we read and hear daily from our historically ignorant columnists and pundits.

Well before the occupation of the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and Gaza, Arab leaders promised to destroy Israel and wipe the Jews off the face of the earth—not for what they had done, but for who they were: successful and proud reminders of what their neighbors were not. Without first seeing a change in the heart and minds of the Arab world, one would have to be mad today to advocate returning land for "peace." Americans should read this book and remember that.

We mourn the death of

P. T. Bauer

whose groundbreaking essays on economic development appeared in COMMENTARY from 1976 to 1987.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bruce Berkowitz is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

Defense policy is admittedly a complex topic. To understand the issue, it helps to keep five numbers in mind.

The first number is $750 billion. That's what all the world's nations combined spend on defense, according to the CIA *World Factbook*. It has been declining most years—but slowly—since the end of the cold war.

The second number is 3.2 percent. That's the part of the U.S. gross national product that our country spends on defense. It has been slowly declining, too, for the past decade. The percentage is small by historic standards. During the cold war it ranged from two to four times greater. It means we can maintain our current defense budgets with little or no effect on the U.S. economy. We're running at a comfortable pace.

The third number is $379 billion—the defense budget requested by the Bush administration for fiscal year 2003. It includes a $10 billion contingency fund to fight terrorism. What's interesting about this number is that **the United States now spends as much on defense as everyone else in the world combined.**

Rarely in history has a single country been so dominant. During the cold war, pundits argued over whether the Soviet Union or the United States was ahead in the so-called arms race. Today there isn't even a race. It means that the United States can do things no one else can—such as transport thousands of troops halfway around the world, build aircraft invisible to radar, and design bombs to land within a few feet of their target.

The fourth number is 17.6. That is the rate at which China increased its defense spending this year. It just reminds us that, despite America's predominance, there are countries willing to make the investment to challenge us at least in some regions.

The fifth number is 3,061—the number of people killed at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and Somerset County, Pennsylvania, on September 11. This number reminds us that, though the United States is supreme in traditional military capabilities, hostile countries and terrorist groups can still strike directly at America from halfway around the world with devastating results.

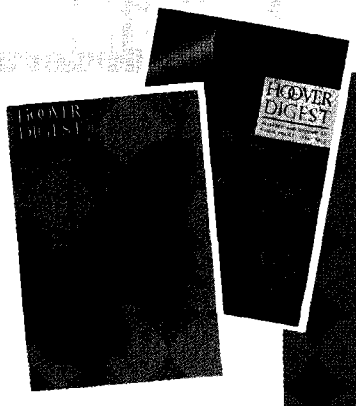
These numbers are important, but the biggest issues facing U.S. defense policy today are not so much "how much" as they are "how"—that is how we select, organize, train, plan, and deploy our forces. **We need to proceed aggressively on military transformation to create the flexible, agile, and rapid-response military force required to counter the asymmetric threats we now face.**

Furthermore, organization is extremely important. The armed services, state governments, and even the private sector must all learn to work together in new ways. Today, threats can come from many different sources, and even seemingly weak adversaries can be dangerous.

Most of all, in the "post-post–cold war" era, the United States needs leaders who can point out threats and head them off early, Leadership and decisiveness are critical in using our powerful—but finite—military forces effectively.

— Bruce Berkowitz

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



Interested in more commentary on public policy?

Visit us on-line at **www.hoover.org** *or contact us to receive a complimentary copy of the 200-page, award-winning* **Hoover Digest.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A world of ideas on public policy.

Incremental Innovation Improves Patient Health

by Albert I. Wertheimer

The process of repeated incremental improvement is the predominant mechanism of innovation and product development within most manufacturing and high-technology companies, including pharmaceutical companies. In fact, the history of clinical pharmacology is characterized by incremental improvements in the safety, efficacy, selectivity, and utility of drugs within a given class. Some critics believe that these incremental advances are too costly and do not ultimately benefit the consumer. In this view, new agents in a class are merely "me-too" drugs with no significant differences from the original agents. This is a misconception. The new medicines resulting from this evolutionary process can offer advantages in terms of improved efficacy, better patient satisfaction and compliance and, in many cases, cost savings.

The existence of multiple agents within a given drug class offers many advantages. One is the availability of alternative agents in cases of treatment failure, and of backup in case an agent is withdrawn from the market. The development of drug product classes is analogous to the evolution of biological species, and the advantages of diversity within groups of pharmaceutical products (i.e., "pharmacodiversity") are similar to the advantages of biodiversity. Within a drug class, products with varying features compete for patients. The emergence of new disease and patient targets expands the role of some agents; others are disadvantaged by newly discovered adverse effects. Thus, those products that are the best "fit" for their environment dominate the marketplace. Other products may become extinct and still others maintain positions in "niche markets."

The availability of multiple agents within a drug class also makes it possible to vary dosage delivery systems and dosage forms, which in turn allows extended uses with a variety of patient populations. Advanced delivery systems provide sustained therapeutic drug levels for long periods of time, can enable the use of smaller or fewer doses, allow a less invasive mode of administration, and prolong circulation of short-lived compounds. Newer drugs in a therapeutic class often represent improvements in therapeutic and adverse effects profiles, metabolism, dosing schedules, ease of administration, and other features. These findings apply to drug classes used to treat many common diseases and patient groups, especially the elderly.

The process of incremental innovation has resulted in striking improvements in existing drug therapy and patient care, and in some cases in reduced total costs for therapy

Moreover, patient responses to and toleration of agents are subject to great individual variations. The availability of a broad range of medicines gives physicians a "tool chest" for treating the individual needs of diverse patients with precision, as well as for giving those patients options when the first agent used is either ineffective or not well-tolerated.

In addition, some incremental innovations have been associated with overall cost savings. Newer agents of a class, or new formulations of existing agents, often enable new cost-effective uses or more efficient treatment for the original indication. These savings can come from reduced overall treatment costs due to shortened or eliminated hospital stays, less need for surgery, increased worker efficiency, and less absenteeism. Moreover, since incremental innovations must compete with their predecessors for market share, they are often priced at a discount. New drugs in a class are frequently priced lower than existing agents within that class.

Policies that limit the availability of incremental drug innovations may deny access to important therapies, reduce competition, and erode incentives for research. Over time, the process of incremental innovation has resulted in striking improvements in existing drug therapy and patient care, and in some cases in reduced total costs for therapy. However, short-term attempts to contain current costs, in the form of price controls or limitations on reimbursement for incremental innovations, may reduce incentives for research on these products. Access to important therapies could be reduced and competition within drug classes could diminish. Therapeutics would become less differentiated; the "average patient" would be treated with the "average drug." Patients with more specific needs would not receive individualized treatment because more selective pharmaceutical therapies would not exist.

Policy makers must weigh the risks and benefits associated with cost-containment tactics that limit the availability of incremental pharmaceutical innovation. Since drug therapy is generally agreed to be the most cost-effective treatment modality, the economic as well as the clinical stakes are high.

Albert I. Wertheimer, Ph.D., M.B.A., is director of the Center for Pharmaceutical Health Services Research at Temple University School of Pharmacy. This article is based on a longer study – "Too Many Drugs? The Clinical and Economic Value of Incremental Innovations," co-authored with Richard Levy, Ph.D. and Thomas W. O'Connor, Pharm.D., M.B.A – that was published in **Investing in Health: The Social and Economic Benefits of Health Care Innovation**, *vol. 14 (2001), pp. 77-118. The full study is available online at http://www.npcnow.org/productlist/PDF/toomanydrugs.pdf*

PFIZER FORUM IS AN ADVERTISING SERIES SPONSORED IN THE INTEREST OF ENCOURAGING PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON POLICY QUESTIONS AND FEATURING A WIDE VARIETY OF VIEWS FROM LEADING POLICY EXPERTS. PFIZER IS A RESEARCH BASED, GLOBAL PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY. PFIZER INC, 235 EAST 42ND STREET, NEW YORK 10017-5755 USA. HTTP://WWW.PFIZER.COM

Pfizer

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED